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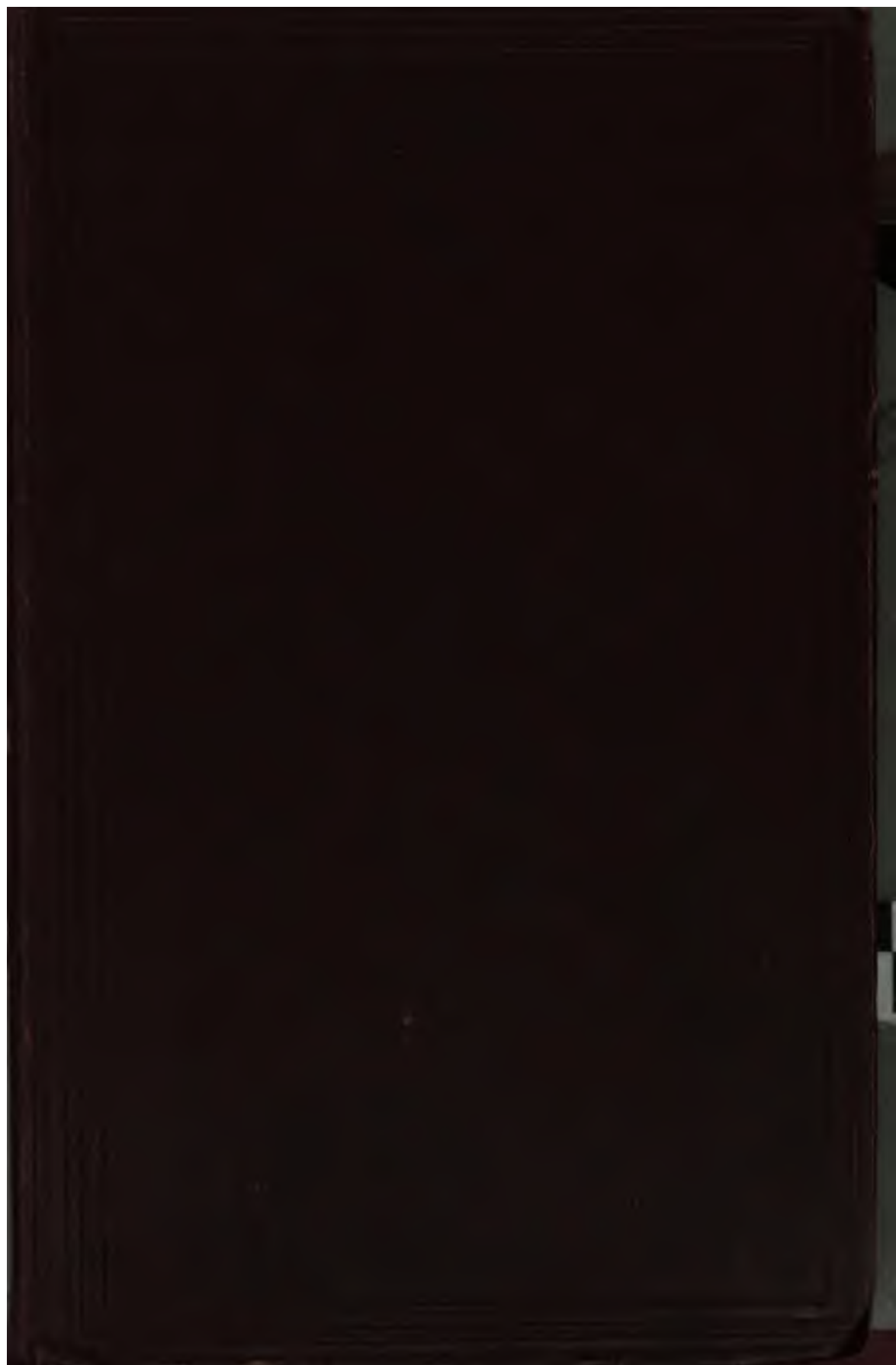
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THE LIFE AND TIMES
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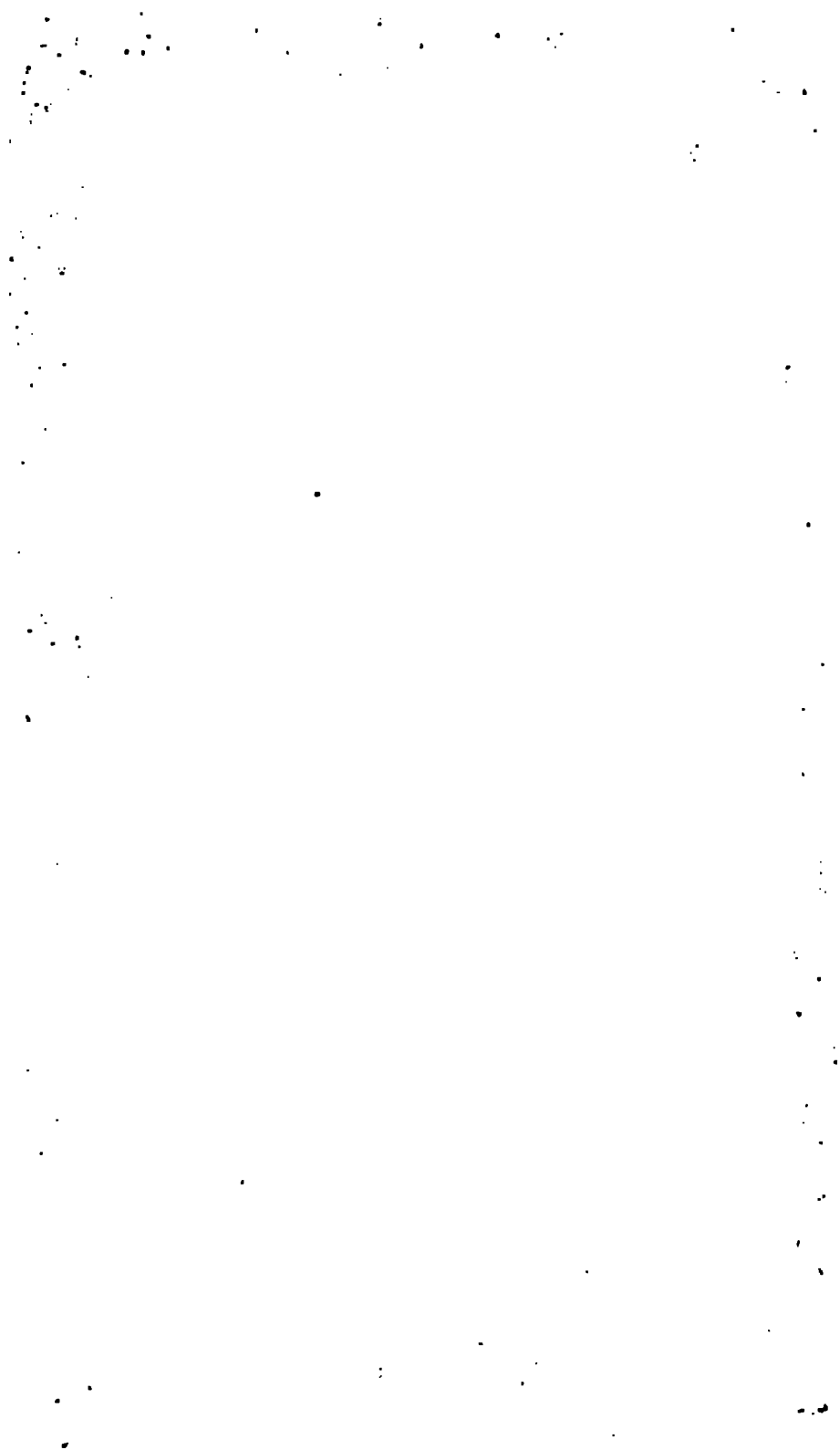




Sam^l Wesley.

210. e. 113:

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Sam^l Wesley.

210. c. 113.



Sam. Wesley.

THE LIFE AND TIMES

REV. SAMUEL WESLEY, M.A.,

REV. JOHN WESLEY,

L. YERMAN.

LONDON:

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210. e. 115.

TO
THE REVEREND WILLIAM SHAW,
PRESIDENT OF THE METHODIST CONFERENCE,

This Volume

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

AS A SMALL TRIBUTE

TO HIS

LONG AND USEFUL LABOURS AT HOME AND ABROAD,

AND AS AN

EXPRESSION OF THE BENEFIT DERIVED FROM

HIS PRIVATE FRIENDSHIP

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I HAVE the conviction that due honour has never yet been paid to Samuel Wesley. The praises of his noble wife have been sung loudly and long ; and no one acquainted with her character and history, can doubt that Mrs Wesley deserves all the laurels that have been awarded her. While the general public, however, have justly regarded her as a lady of the most eminent abilities, and most exalted piety, they have been in danger of thinking that her husband, though learned, was often foolish ; and though pious, was painfully eccentric, stern, and quarrelsome. This is utterly unfounded, and cruelly unjust. I submit, with all due deference to others, that while the Methodists owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to "the mother of the Wesleys," they owe an equal debt to the honest-hearted father. I trust that the present work contains sufficient evidence of this.

It is also hoped that the following pages will help the reader to a better understanding of the position occupied by Samuel Wesley's sons, John and Charles ; and

of the difficulties and discouragements encountered by the illustrious first Methodists.

The "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," by Dr Clarke, though loosely written, have been of great service in the compilation of the present volume ; but a large number of other works have also been consulted. I have carefully examined everything that Mr Wesley published, except perhaps his first political pamphlet ; and as that was published anonymously, I cannot be *certain* that I have seen it. I am not aware that there is any *printed* matter, casting light on Mr Wesley's history, that I have not laid under contribution. To have cited all the authorities from which the work has been compiled, would have crowded the margin with an inconvenient number of titles of tracts, pamphlets, and books. A few are given, and the remainder can be easily adduced if needed.

For the chapters on national affairs, I am largely indebted to Macaulay, and to Knight's "Pictorial History of England ;" also to the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian* ; and to other publications of a kindred character. In some instances, quotations have not been marked by inverted commas ; because they have not been made continuously, but pickings from ten or a dozen pages of another work have been put into half a page of this. I hope that this general acknowledgment will save me from the charge of plagiarism.

A few original letters are now for the first time pub-

lished. For three of these, I am indebted to the kind courtesy of the Rev. Elijah Hoole, D.D.

The portrait is taken from the large engraving published in the year of Mr Wesley's decease, in his "Dissertations on the Book of Job."

The work has been a labour of love ; and if the reader derives as much profit and pleasure in perusing it as the author has had in writing it, I shall be amply satisfied.

L. TYERMAN.

STANHOPE HOUSE, CLAPHAM PARK,

January 18, 1866.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

SAMUEL WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO—1640-1665.

SAMUEL WESLEY was born a little more than two hundred years ago; and a brief review of the state of the nation and of the Church at that period will be useful in illustrating some parts of his history.

From March 1629 to April 1640, the houses of legislature had not assembled; never in English history had there been an interval of eleven years between one parliament and another. Charles I. had systematically attempted to make himself a despot, and to reduce the parliament to a nullity.

To make bad things worse, Archbishop Laud, in the year 1640, convened Convocation, which ordered that every clergyman should instruct his parishioners once a quarter, in the divine right of kings, and the damnable sin of resistance to authority. By the divine right of kings was meant, that the Supreme Being regarded hereditary monarchy, as opposed to other forms of government, with peculiar favour; that the rule of succession, in order of primogeniture, was a divine institution anterior to the Christian, and even to the Mosaic dispensation; that no human power, not even that of the whole legislature, could deprive the legitimate prince of his rights; and that the laws by which, in England and in

other countries, the prerogative was limited, were to be regarded merely as concessions, which the sovereign had freely made, and which he might at his pleasure resume.

By the same ecclesiastical parliament, all clergymen and all graduates in the universities were required to take an oath, that everything necessary for salvation was contained in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, as distinguished from Presbyterianism and Papistry; and they were also required to swear that they would not consent to any alteration of the government of the Church, by archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons. Those refusing to take such oaths were threatened with heavy penalties.

This assumption of ecclesiastical power, on the part of Convocation, was most offensively absurd. The nation for years had been divided both in politics and religion; and it was not to be expected that such decrees could be issued without provoking resistance and creating trouble. Hence, in the same year, and in the year following, we find a crowd of events which exerted a most powerful influence on the subsequent history of the nation. The House of Commons, which, after an interval of eleven years, was again brought together, appointed a grand committee of the whole house to inquire into the scandalous immoralities of the clergy. Above two thousand cases were presented, and the work of cleansing the Augean stable became so heavy, that the grand committee had to divide itself into four or five sub-committees, called White's, Corbett's, Harlow's, and Dearing's committees, after the chairman of each. An act also was passed by the House of Commons, that the clergy should not be magistrates, neither should officiate as judges in civil courts. Lord Strafford—eloquent and bold, but imperious and cruel, Charles's most trusted counsellor, and one whose object it had been to make his royal master as absolute a monarch as any in Europe—was arrested, tried, and beheaded. The Star Chamber and the High Commission courts, the former a political, the latter a religious inquisition, were abolished. Thirteen bishops were impeached by the Lower House of Parliament, Archbishop Laud being one of them. The London apprentices began their riots. Two hundred thousand Protestant men, women, and children, were massacred in Ireland, and thousands more had to flee to England, naked and famished, to obtain subsistence. The papistical butchers, not satisfied with this, proceeded to threaten that, when they had wreaked their vengeance on

the handful left in Ireland, they would come to England, and inflict upon the Protestants there the same barbarities.

It was impossible for such events to happen without public feeling being excited to the highest pitch. The parliament was aroused ; the country rose to arms ; and the civil wars commenced. The Commons passed a resolution that they would never consent to any toleration of the popish religion, either in Ireland or any other part of his majesty's dominions ; and another bill was passed excluding bishops from the House of Lords. From this date, the Church of England, if not entirely demolished, may be regarded as a ruin.

In 1642, a committee was appointed by the House of Commons to inquire " what malignant clergymen had benefices in and about London, which benefices, being sequestered, might be supplied by others, who should receive their profits ; " and in the year following, the " Scandalous Committee " of 1640, and the " Plundering Committee " of 1642, (as the royalists called them,) were empowered to act in concert ; and, by their united efforts, the Church was well-nigh cleared both of the clergymen who were immoral, and of those whose opinions did not harmonise with the opinions generally entertained by parliament. Many left their cures, and took sanctuary in the king's armies ; others were put under confinement in Lambeth, Winchester, and Ely ; and about twenty were imprisoned beneath deck in ships on the river Thames, no friend being allowed to come near them. Several pious and worthy bishops and other clergymen, who desired to live peaceably without joining either side, had their estates and livings sequestered, and their houses and goods plundered, and were themselves reduced to live upon the fifths, a small pension from parliament. Among these may be mentioned, Archbishop Usher, Bishops Morton and Hall, and the no less renowned Jeremy Taylor, who, driven from his living at Uppingham, retired into Wales, and, while supporting himself and his family by teaching a school, there composed some of the greatest of his immortal works.

For the space of about two years, the country might be said to be without any established form of worship. The clergy were left to read the liturgy, or not to read it, as they pleased, and to use equal discretion as to wearing the canonical habits, or the Geneva cloak. The ecclesiastical polity of the realm was in total confusion. Episcopacy was the form of government prescribed by

the old law of the land, which was not repealed ; but the form of government prescribed by parliamentary ordinance was presbyterian ; and yet, neither the old law, nor the parliamentary ordinance, was practically in force. The Church actually established may be described as an irregular body, made up of a few presbyteries, and of many independent congregations, all held down and held together by the authority of government. Cathedral worship was almost everywhere abolished, and many of the sacred edifices themselves defaced and injured. By the parliamentary ordinance of 1643, clergymen, both bad and good, were ejected from their benefices by thousands ; altars and stone tables in churches were destroyed ; candlesticks, tapers, and basins standing upon communion tables were unsparingly removed ; and all crosses, crucifixes, images, and superstitious pictures and paintings demolished. Churches and sepulchres, fine works of art and curious remains of antiquity, met with the same ruthless treatment. In Chichester Cathedral, the rabble, meeting with the portrait of King Edward VI., picked out its eyes, because Edward had established the Book of Common Prayer. In Canterbury Cathedral, where they found the arras-hangings, representing the history of Christ, they swore they would stab the picture of our Saviour, and rip up its bowels, which they did accordingly ; while at the south gate, they discharged forty muskets at a carved figure of Christ, and rejoiced exceedingly when they hit it on the head or face. At Lichfield, they stabled their horses in the body of the church, polluted the orchestra, baptized a calf at the baptismal font, and hunted a cat with hounds every day throughout the windings of the sacred edifice.

While such proceedings were taking place in cathedrals and churches, parliament was passing sharp laws against betting, and enacting that adultery should be punished with death. Public amusements, from masques in the mansions of the great, down to wrestling and grinning matches on village greens, were vigorously attacked. All the May-poles in England were ordered to be hewn down. Play-houses were to be dismantled, the spectators fined, and the actors whipped at the cart's tail. Magistrates dispersed festive meetings, and put fiddlers in the stocks. The zeal of the soldiers was still more formidable, for in every village where they happened to appear, there was an end of dancing, bell-ringing, and hockey.

Meanwhile several sects sprung into existence, whose eccentricities surpassed anything that had ever been seen in England. A mad tailor, named Ludowick Muggleton, wandered from pothouse to pothouse, tipping ale, and denouncing eternal torments against those who refused to believe, on his testimony, that the Supreme Being was only six feet high, and that the sun was just four miles from the earth. Another sect of fanatics, which now sprung up, were the Fifth Monarchy Men, so called because they taught that the four great monarchies of the world were about to be succeeded by the monarchy of Christ, who would reign among mankind for a thousand years. The powers of earth were to be utterly destroyed, and Christ to be king alone. Acting upon their fanatical principles, in 1660 they scoured the streets of London, committing murder, without distinction of age or sex, till they came to Aldersgate Street, where they halted, and proclaimed king Jesus, crying out, "No king but Christ." These enthusiasts fought like lions; but, of course, were overpowered. A number of them were killed in the skirmish that took place in scattering them; and sixteen, who were taken prisoners, were drawn on sledges from Newgate through Cheapside to a place opposite their meeting-house in Swan Alley, Coleman Street, where they were hanged and quartered, their quarters being afterwards set upon the four gates of the city. George Fox, also, raised a tempest of derision by proclaiming that it was a violation of Christian sincerity to designate a single person by a plural pronoun; and that it was an idolatrous homage to Janus and Woden to talk about January and Wednesday. He hated Episcopacy, steeple houses, and the liturgy; and propounded the most extravagant whimsies concerning postures, dress, and diversions. One of his coadjutors was John Hinks, first a shepherd's boy, and then a shoemaker, prodigiously ignorant, and yet an enthusiast, who pretended to be inspired. James Naylor was another of Fox's mad associates, a man who, when he entered Bristol, stripped himself stark naked, had his horse led in triumph by two women, while his nasal-twanged followers strewed branches in his way, and shouted "Hosannah." Solomon Eccles, one of the Quakers' chief teachers, went naked into the church at Aldermanbury, in the time of divine service, bedaubed all over with filth, as an emblem of the nakedness and filth of the minister who was preaching. And two women, at Kendal, of the names of Adlington and Collinson, are said to have walked

through the streets of that town in the same state of nudity, and who, when friendly hands tried to cover them, rebuked such kindness, by declaring that "it hindered the work of the Lord."

Such, substantially, was the state of affairs, when, in 1643, the Assembly of Divines met, by an ordinance of parliament, in the city of Westminster, for "settling the government and liturgy of the Church of England, and for vindicating and clearing the said Church from false aspersions and interpretations." The Assembly consisted of thirty members of parliament, including six noblemen; and of one hundred and twenty-one ministers, including Dr Lightfoot, Edmund Calamy, and Joseph Caryl. Baxter says, the divines were men of eminent learning and godliness, ministerial abilities and fidelity. Each member of the Assembly had four shillings a-day allowed by parliament towards his expenses. They sat five years, six months, and twenty-two days, during which time they had 1163 sessions. A few of the members were attached to Episcopacy; but, finding themselves in a hopeless minority, they soon retired. The great majority were in favour of Presbyterianism; but these, to the last, were vigorously opposed by a minority, consisting of two sections, who, although they generally acted in concert against the common enemy, were also distinguishable from each other. These were, first, the Independents; and, secondly, the Erastians, so called because of their adoption of the principles of Erastus, a German divine of the preceding century, who maintained that the Church, or the clergy, as such, possessed no inherent legislative power of any kind, and that the National Church was, in all respects, the mere subject and creature of the civil magistrate.

Such were the men to whom was committed the work of building up a new ecclesiastical polity. By their advice alterations were made in the Thirty-nine Articles, the intention being to render their sense more express and determinate in favour of Calvinism. In 1645, their "Directory of Public Worship" supplanted the liturgy, and was established by an ordinance of parliament. They also agreed in introducing and enforcing the Solemn League and Covenant, by which Episcopacy was abjured. In 1646, the name, style, and dignity of archbishops and bishops were formally abolished; and, in 1649, the "Confession of Faith," which laid down a Presbyterian system of ecclesiastical polity, received the sanction of an Act of Parliament.

Many difficulties, however, stood in the way of the actual extension of this new system over the whole kingdom ; and, in fact, it never obtained more than a very limited and imperfect establishment. Accordingly, the National Church of England, during the Commonwealth, was by no means exclusively composed of Presbyterians, (though they were the most numerous,) for some of the benefices were still retained by their old Episcopal incumbents ; a considerable number were held by Independents, and a few were filled even by the minor sects, that now swarmed in the sunshine of the Protector's all but universal toleration.

King Charles was beheaded in 1649, and Oliver Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector in 1653. A quarter of a century before he was raised to this high position, Cromwell had openly deserted the Church of England, and attached himself to the Puritans, who were just then rising into wealth and power. Under the Commonwealth, the Dissenters increased in numbers, and exercised a predominating influence in national affairs. Besides being incumbents of parish churches, their ministers officiated as chaplains of political bodies ; and preached to mayors and aldermen, as they sat arrayed in golden chains and scarlet robes at Guildhall festivals. The rights of presentation to church livings were still retained to patrons ; but, to prevent abuses, Cromwell, in 1653, appointed a Board of Commissioners to examine all candidates for holy orders, and without whose sanction none could be admitted to a church benefice. These "Triers," as they were called, were thirty-eight in number. Part of them were Presbyterians, part were Independents, and a few were Baptists. Among them were Dr Thomas Goodwin, Dr John Owen, Joseph Caryl, the author of the gigantic Commentary on the Book of Job, and Thomas Manton, whose writings, so full of sanctified genius, will be prized by the Church of Christ to the end of time. Baxter tells us that the Triers, with all their faults, did a great amount of good. They saved many a congregation from ignorant, ungodly, drunken teachers. All that either preached against a godly life, or preached as though they knew not what it was ; and all those that used the ministry as a common trade, and merely as a means of getting bread, were usually rejected ; while all who were able, serious preachers, and whose lives were holy, were admitted, of whatsoever opinions they were, so long as their opinions were "tolerable." The authority of Cromwell's Triers was almost un-

limited, and, certainly, was not unneeded. Previous to their appointment, any one who wished might set up to be a preacher, and so give himself a chance of obtaining a living in the Church. Now, every candidate for the pulpit and emoluments of a parish church had to bring to the Board of Triers, sitting at Whitehall, a testimonial, subscribed by the hands of three persons of known goodness and integrity, one of whom, at least, had to be a preacher of the gospel in some constant settled place. On the candidate passing his examination, he was inducted to the church living, to which he had been presented, by a document, given in the name of the Triers, signed by the State Registrar, and sealed with the seal of the Commonwealth. He then took possession, cultivated the glebe lands, prayed, if he choose, without book or surplice, and administered the eucharist to communicants seated at long tables. In some instances there was also formed a sort of independent church outside the parish church, to whom the preacher administered the sacraments, not in the parochial edifice, but in private houses. It is impossible to ascertain the exact number of these beneficed Dissenters, under the Commonwealth, but it may be safely inferred, that they were numerous, when it is borne in mind that, after the elevation of Cromwell to the Protectorate, they were favoured by the ruling powers; and, after the Restoration, were regarded by their opponents with great anxiety.

Of the two, the Presbyterians were more numerous than the Independents, and, in many instances, the feeling between the parties was anything but brotherly. Cromwell had tried to be impartial, and to allow all classes, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, to have a fair share of church emoluments, and thereby he hoped to secure something like church amity, but the effort was futile and the hope not realised.

Among the ministers who, during the Commonwealth, occupied the pulpits of England, there were not a few who will always rank among England's most powerful preachers, and most profound divines. Besides these there were likewise men in the country belonging to other classes, whose names will ever be invested with a halo of honour. Dr Busby was master of Westminster School, and celebrated alike for his classical abilities and unflinching discipline. Vandyke was putting on canvas his unequalled portraits; and Inigo Jones reviving classical architecture. There were also Andrew Marvell, renowned as the first of patriots and of wits; George

Withers, some of whose earlier poetry, especially, abounds in the finest bursts of sunshine; John Milton, Cudworth, Sir Thomas Browne, and others of a like character.

The morals of the nation, up to the time of Charles's execution, were about as bad as badness could make them. The chief amusements of the court were masques, and emblematic pageants, some of which cost more than £20,000 each. Extravagance in dress and personal adornment had become an absolute phrenzy. James I., when transported from the scantily-furnished halls of Holyrood to the plentiful palaces of the south, burst from a clumsy, ungainly figure into a gilded coxcomb, almost daily figuring in a new suit, and his courtiers copying his example. When Buckingham was sent ambassador to the court of France, his suit of white velvet was set all over with diamonds, valued at £80,000; and, besides this, he had another suit of purple satin, embroidered with pearls worth £20,000. In fact, the beaux of this period were animated trinkets. Prodigality in feasting soon became as conspicuous as extravagance in dress; and gambling kept pace with both. The manners of the court, and of both sexes in the higher classes, were gross in the extreme. English taverns were dens of filth, tobacco smoke, roaring songs, and roysterers; and yet, even in such places, women of rank allowed themselves to be entertained, and tolerated those freedoms from their admirers which are described with such startling plainness in our old plays and poems. The streets of London, and even of the inferior towns, were filled with prowling sharpers; and the highways of England were equally infested with robbers, concealing their faces with visors, and carrying in their pockets false tails for their otherwise well-known horses. Divination was a thriving business; and fortune-telling was frequently a cover to the worse trades of pandering and poisoning. The stars were more eagerly studied than the diurnals; and both cavaliers and roundheads thronged to astrologers to learn the events of the succeeding week. Exorcising devils was common, and the belief in witches became the master superstition of the age; so that between three and four thousand persons are said to have been executed for witchcraft between the year 1640 and the Restoration.

Of course, during the Commonwealth, when Puritan principles were in the ascendancy, a great change came over the general manners and morals of the land. Republican simplicity prevailed

in the banquets at Whitehall; Scotch collops, marrow puddings, and hog's-liver sausages forming standing dishes of Lady Cromwell's cookery. Religion was the language of the court, and also its garb; prayer and fasting were fashionable exercises: and a godly profession was the road to preferment. Not a play was acted in all England for many years, and from the prince to the peasant and common soldier, the features of Puritanism were almost universally exhibited. Many doubtless were fanatics and others designing knaves, whose whole religion consisted in the use of a religious vocabulary and hypocritical grimace; but making all due allowance for a large amount of unscriptural enthusiasm and pious fraud, there were unquestionably among those sickly dreamers and canting fanatics, thousands and tens of thousands of enlightened, sincere, and earnest Christians.

Cromwell died in 1658. Immediately after his death, the Protectorate broke down under his son Richard, and confusion became worse confounded. The army was unsettled, the parliament divided, the republic was discouraged, trade decayed, and the exchequer empty. The majority of the nation were weary of change, and had no faith in ideal republics; and, by the spring of 1660, public feeling was strongly in favour of the restoration of Charles II. In the month of March, the Rump Parliament was finally dissolved. All the bells in London were set a ringing; and, as Pepys tells us, bonfires blazed on every side, there being not fewer than fourteen burning, at the same time, between St Dunstan's and Temple Bar.

The Presbyterians now stood foremost, and, in Parliament, were the leaders. The League and Covenant was hung on the walls of the House of Commons, and was ordered to be read in every church once a year; but in March 1660, as an indication of other changes coming, Dr John Owen, Cromwell's chaplain, was removed from the deanery of Christ's Church, Oxford, and Dr, afterwards Bishop, Reynolds was appointed in his place. On the 30th of April, a public fast was held, Reynolds and Hardy preaching before the House of Lords; and Gauden, Calamy, and Baxter before the House of Commons. On the 1st of May, Sir John Granville arrived from Breda with despatches from Charles II.; one being addressed to the House of Lords, and another to the House of Commons. The latter contained the famous "Declaration of Breda," offering indemnity for the past, and liberty of conscience

for the future. The declaration was, "We do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question for difference of opinions, which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom." Within a fortnight after this, Charles was proclaimed king, amid "festivals, bells, and bonfires," Richard Baxter preaching a sermon on the occasion, before the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London.

The restoration of Charles being settled, several members of the Lords and Commons, on the 11th of May, started off to Holland to meet him. The city of London sent commissioners, and with them went certain Presbyterian ministers, as Reynolds, Manton, and Calamy. These reverend brethren told the king that they had urged the people to restore him to the throne of his father, and declared themselves as no enemies to moderate Episcopacy; but begged that his Majesty would dispense with the surplice being worn, and that, instead of adopting the use of the Common Prayer entirely and formally, he would direct that only some parts of it should be read, with some superadded prayers by his chaplains. At the end of the month Charles landed at Dover. The castle guns bid him welcome. Thousands upon thousands, standing upon the beach and cliffs, waved their hats, and gave right hearty cheers. When he arrived in London, the corporation waited in a tent at St George's-in-the-Fields to receive him. All the houses in Southwark, Cheapside, Fleet Street, and the Strand were hung with banners and adorned with tapestry. The Livery companies turned out in their velvet coats, silver doublets, and rich green scarfs; while kettle-drums and trumpets made all London ring again. Addresses flowed in from all quarters welcoming the king back to Old England, and, among others, one from the county of Devon, bearing among others the signature of the celebrated Joseph Caryl.

All seemed to be unanimous and jubilant; and yet all this was but the beginning of the tug of war. Charles was a constitutional king, and was to rule through parliaments. The Presbyterians, who were still in power, expected royal favour for recent services, and to be comprehended in some wide church establishment. Independents, Baptists, and Quakers asked for toleration. Roman Catholics, who had been friends to the beheaded father and the exiled son, thought themselves entitled to consideration. While the Episcopalians claimed the new monarch as their own, sought

exclusive re-establishment, wished to cast out all Presbyterian intruders, and were inwardly resolved to tolerate no sectaries whatever. Charles's position was difficult and perplexing.

Alterations were soon made. The dioceses in England had bishops appointed to them, though it was not until the next parliament, in 1661, that the bishops took their places among the peers. The Liturgy was immediately introduced into those parish churches, where the ministers avowed themselves Episcopalians; and, already, the reign of persecution had commenced. Even before the king had landed at Dover, the Episcopal party in Wales were busy sending sixty-eight Quakers to gaol; while the prison at Montgomery was so full of Independents and Baptists that the governor had to pack them into garrets. John Milton was committed to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, and was declared to be disqualified for the public service; while his "Defence of the English People" and his "Eikonoclastes" were ordered to be publicly burned. Oliver Heywood was insolently harassed for a twelvemonth with citations to appear before the Consistory Court at York. Philip Henry was prosecuted for not reading the Common Prayer, and John Howe was accused of treason for some utterance in the pulpit. During the summer of 1660, a bill was passed by parliament, which aimed at the expulsion of all who had been inducted into church livings during the Commonwealth, and the immediate restoration of all the clergy who had been expelled. This bill included a proviso to the effect that the Presbyterian and Independent ministers should not be bound to give back livings which were legally vacant when they obtained them; but there was another that almost rendered null the previous one, viz., that every incumbent should be excluded that had not been ordained by an ecclesiastic, or had renounced his ordination, or had petitioned for bringing the late king to trial, or had justified his trial and execution, in preaching or in writing, or had committed himself in the vexed question of infant baptism.

The bill failed to give satisfaction to any party. The Episcopalians complained that it was a thing of mean subterfuges and compromises; while the Dissenters alleged that the Episcopalians were monopolists of honours and preferments, and were waiting to renew the persecutions of Archbishop Laud.

Archbishop Usher, who died in 1656, had left behind him a scheme of union, and a proposed plan of church government by

suffragan bishops, and synods, and presbyteries conjointly. By this plan he had fondly hoped to reconcile the two great religious parties, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians; and the latter, being now hopeless of obtaining an entire supremacy, professed their willingness to make Usher's scheme the basis of negotiation. The principal ministers, who were parties to this proposal, were Dr Reynolds, Dr Manton, Dr Bates, Edward Calamy, and Richard Baxter. They were promised a meeting with some Episcopal divines in the presence of the king; but when the time appointed came, instead of a meeting, the Presbyterians received a paper rejecting their proposal, but telling them that they were all to meet the king on October 22d, at the house of Lord Clarendon, in the Strand, and that his Majesty would then adjust all their religious differences. At the appointed meeting there were present, besides the king, the Dukes of Albemarle and Ormond, the Earls of Manchester and Anglesea, the six bishops of London, Worcester, Salisbury, Durham, Exeter, and Lichfield, and six Presbyterian ministers, viz., Reynolds, Spurstow, Wallis, Manton, Calamy, and Baxter. The Presbyterians entrusted their cause to the eloquence and learning of Calamy and Baxter; while the chief speakers on the Episcopalian side were Dr Gunning and Bishop Morley.

Three days after this important meeting, Charles published what is commonly called "The Healing Declaration." This royal manifesto, after commending the Episcopalians, and acknowledging the moderation of the Presbyterians, promised—1, To encourage religion; 2, To appoint suffragan bishops where dioceses were thought to be too large; 3, Not to allow church censures to be pronounced by bishops without the advice and assistance of the presbyters; 4, To give deaneries to the most learned and pious presbyters of the diocese; 5, Not to allow persons to come to the Lord's Supper without confirmation and a credible profession of their faith; and 6, To appoint an equal number of learned divines belonging to the Episcopalians and Presbyterians to revise the Liturgy.

As soon as this Declaration was made public, bishoprics were offered to Reynolds, Baxter, and Calamy. Reynolds accepted the see of Norwich; Baxter and Calamy declined. A fortnight after, royal letters were issued commanding the University of Cambridge to confer the diploma of D.D. on the three eminent Presbyterian

ministers, William Bates, Thomas Jacombe, and Robert Wilde, the king being fully satisfied "of their integrity and loyalty;" and, at the same time, a bill was brought into the House of Commons to make the king's "Healing Declaration" law, but the bill was lost.

As time advanced, the prospects of the Dissenters became more gloomy. On January 2, 1661, an Order in Council was made against Baptists, Quakers, and other sectaries meeting in large numbers and at unusual times. The order also forbade any of their assemblies being held out of their own parishes.

Shortly after this, at the request of Baxter, Lord Clarendon made an arrangement for carrying into effect that part of the king's "Healing Declaration" which promised a revision of the Liturgy. Twelve bishops and nine coadjutors were appointed to represent the Episcopal party, and twelve leading divines and nine coadjutors to represent the Presbyterian party. The twelve bishops belonged to the dioceses of York, London, Durham, Rochester, Chichester, Sarum, Worcester, Lincoln, Peterborough, Chester, Carlisle, and Exeter. Among their coadjutors were some of the most eminent men of the day, as Dr Heylin, and Dr Pearson, immortalised by his profoundly able work on the Apostles' Creed. The twelve Presbyterian divines included Reynolds, Manton, Calamy, and Baxter; and their coadjutors included the "silver-tongued" William Bates and Dr Lightfoot. The place of meeting was the old Savoy Palace, and the first day of their coming together was April 15, 1661. Baxter proposed an entirely new Liturgy; and, in the short space of a fortnight, prepared one. His brethren meanwhile were employed in preparing exceptions to the old one, which Baxter wished to set aside. Baxter seemed to be equal to any amount of work assigned to him. When he brought his completed draft of the new Liturgy to his co-commissioners, instead of finding their exceptions to the old Liturgy finished, he found them only just begun; and, as both the draft and the exceptions had to be submitted to the Savoy Conference at the same time, there was no alternative but to wait another fortnight; during which Baxter himself prepared as many exceptions to the old prayer-book as filled eight closely-printed folio pages.

On the Conference reassembling, the Presbyterians read their paper, pleading that, as the first Reformers composed the Liturgy so as to draw the Papists into their communion, the Liturgy ought

now to be so revised as to unite all substantial Protestants. Hence it was suggested that certain repetitions should be omitted; that the Litany should be turned into one continued prayer; that neither Lent nor Saints' Days should continue to be observed; that free prayer should be allowed; that the Apocrypha should not be read in the daily lessons; that the word "minister" should be used instead of the word "priest;" and "Lord's-day" instead of "Sunday;" that the Liturgy was defective in praise and thanksgiving; that the Confession and Catechism were imperfect; and that the surplice, the cross, and kneeling at the Lord's Supper, were unwarrantable. All these, however, were regarded as minor objections; and the main ones that were raised were against the baptismal service, the marriage service, the service for the visitation of the sick, and the burial service.

When the objections had been submitted to the Conference, the bishops and their coadjutors rejected them *in toto*. Baxter was appointed to answer the reply of the bishops, and went out of town, to Dr Spurstow's house in Hackney, for that purpose. In eight days his rejoinder was finished. Unprofitable disputes followed; the Conference broke up; and nothing but vexation and sorrow came out of it.

The Presbyterians were now treated as the vanquished party; and Baxter especially became the butt for malignant marksmen. Almost every time he preached he was accused of treason; and even his prayers were listened to with suspicion. Still, as the parliament now sitting had been elected before the Restoration, the Presbyterians in that assembly were too numerous and troublesome to permit of summary suppression. Hence, in March 1661, a new election was ordered, and great excitement followed. Alderman Thompson, "a godly man of good parts, and a congregationalist," was one of the candidates for London; but the Royalists objected to him, because he was "so fond of smoking that his breath would poison a whole committee." Dr Caryl and other eminent ministers held a fast. Zachary Crofton preached against bishops "every Sunday night, with an infinite auditory, itching, and applause;" and Mr Graffen had a crowd of two thousand in the streets, who could not get into his meeting-house to hear him "bang the bishops."

The new parliament met on the 8th of May 1661; and the change from Presbyterian to Episcopalian predominancy was mani-

feasted in one of the earliest orders,—viz., that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, on the Sunday seven night, should be administered, at St Margaret's Church, according to the form prescribed in the Liturgy of the Church of England; and that no one should be admitted a member of that House who neglected to partake of the Communion, either there publicly, or afterwards in the presence of two or more witnesses. In addition to this, it was resolved that "the Solemn League and Covenant," the well-known symbol of Presbyterian ascendancy—which, for a year past, had been taken down from the walls of the House of Commons—should be burnt by the common hangman; and this was done, the hangman first tearing the document into pieces, and then burning the fragments in succession,—he all the while lifting up his hands and eyes in pious indignation, until not a shred was left.*

Before the year was ended, the bishops took their place in the House of Lords; and a bill was passed requiring all members of corporations to swear that the "Solemn League and Covenant" was unlawful; and declaring that no one was eligible for office who had not, within one year before, taken the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England."

Added to this, another and a far more important bill was introduced:—"A Bill for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of the Sacraments." The bill was first submitted to Parliament in December 1661, and became law on the 19th of May 1662. During this interval of five months the greatest excitement prevailed throughout the nation. Loud and fierce were

* The Solemn League and Covenant was a contract agreed to by the Scots, in the year 1638, for maintaining their religion free from innovation. In 1643 it was brought into England; and on February 2, of that year, it was enacted, by a joint ordinance of both Houses of Parliament, "that the League and Covenant should be solemnly taken and subscribed, in all places throughout the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales, by all persons above the age of eighteen." Accordingly, it was signed by most of the members of the two houses of legislature, by all the principal officers of the rebel army, by all the *Divines* of the *Assembly* then sitting at Westminster, and by a large number of the people in general. Two of the principal vows were—1. That the party taking and subscribing the Covenant would endeavour to "bring the Churches of God in all the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, confession of faith, and form of church government, as the *Directory* prescribes for worship and catechising." And, 2. That he would "endeavour, without respect of persons, to extirpate Popery and Prelacy—that is to say, church government by archbishops and bishops."

the diatribes uttered from the Episcopal pulpit against Round-heads, Anabaptists, and Quakers. Swarms of pamphlets and broadsides were issued, to support Church and State by argument, but more frequently by ridicule and satire. Many of these, as "Noctroft's Maid Whipt," and the "Antidote of Melancholy made up in Pills," were coarse and filthy in a high degree. Of course, sharp and bitter things were said and written on the Non-conformists' side, but in none of their publications is there anything like the abominable and indecent scurrility which the royalist press published against them.

Before giving a synopsis of the Act of Uniformity, it may be well to say, that the Book of Common Prayer, which it mentions, was the book as revised by Convocation in November 1661. About six hundred alterations had been made in the body of the volume. Forms respecting the weather, prayers to be used at sea, and emendations in the commination, and in the churching of women services were introduced. The calendar was revised, and the Apocrypha appointed to be read in the daily lessons. The absolution was to be pronounced by the "priest," instead of by the "minister." In the Litany, the words "rebellion and schism" were added to the petition against sedition; and the words, "bishops, priests, and deacons," were substituted for "bishops, pastors, and ministers of the Church." A few new collects were added, and, in one of them, a new epithet was added to the title of Charles I., he being styled "our most religious king." None of these things were calculated to make the prayer-book more palatable to the Presbyterian and Dissenting parties, and hence the terrible rupture occasioned by the passing of the Act of Uniformity.

By that act it was provided, that "every parson, vicar, or other minister whatsoever, now enjoying any ecclesiastical benefice or promotion, within this realm of England," who neglected or refused to declare publicly, before his congregation, his "unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things contained and prescribed" in the Book of Common Prayer, on some Lord's-day before the feast of St Bartholomew, in 1662, should be deprived of all his spiritual promotions; and that, henceforth, it should be lawful for all patrons and donors of such church livings to present others to the same, as though the person or persons so offending or neglecting were dead. The act further provided,

that all deans, canons, and prebendaries ; also all heads, fellows, and tutors of colleges ; and likewise all schoolmasters, keeping any public or private schools, should, before the same feast of St Bartholomew, subscribe a declaration to the effect that they would conform to the liturgy of the Church of England, as now by law established ; and that they renounced all obligation from the oath commonly called "The Solemn League and Covenant," and regarded it as an unlawful oath, contrary to the laws and liberties of the kingdom. It likewise enacted that all the church functionaries above-mentioned who refused to subscribe to this declaration were to be deprived of their promotions ; and all schoolmasters who refused were to suffer three months' imprisonment. It also provided that if any minister, not being a foreigner, who was not episcopally ordained, should presume to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper after St Bartholomew's day, he should, for every such offence, forfeit the sum of £100 ; and if he presumed to lecture or preach in any church, chapel, or other place of worship whatever, within the realm of England, he should suffer three months' imprisonment in the common gaol. And another, though minor provision was, that the parishioners of every parish church, at their own cost, should provide for such church, before the feast of St Bartholomew, a true printed copy of the revised Book of Common Prayer ; and that they should be fined £3 for every month, after St Bartholomew's, that they neglected to obey such a mandate.

Such was the substance of that most momentous Act of Parliament. What were the results ? Terrible were the struggles in many a good man's breast during the fourteen weeks elapsing between the 19th of May and the 24th of August 1662. As the corn ripened, and the country rector sat with his wife in the snug parlour, and looked out of the latticed windows on the children chasing the butterflies in the garden, or gathering daisies on the glebe, he had to decide in his heart and conscience whether he should leave all this, or whether he should keep it. He must either *conform*, or he and his family must *go*. Such was the ugly alternative. The vicarage was comfortable and commodious ; the means of usefulness had bright attractions ; and hardest wrench of all it was, to snap the union between the shepherd and his flock. To resolve to *go*, required now and then a woman's quiet fortitude to reinforce a man's more loud resolve.

Meanwhile, mutterings of discontent and growlings of sedition began to be heard on every hand. Rumours circulated that some of the king's regiments were disaffected; that trained bands were refractory or negligent; that gunsmiths were dressing arms; and that Lancashire ministers talked little less than treason. The Court was uncertain whether to execute or to suspend the Act. Presbyterian lords pleaded for indulgence; but Sheldon was opposed to it. It was the long vacation, and few of the council remained in town to decide the point. The nobility were at their country seats enjoying the summer months. The bishops were performing their visitations. Charles was at Hampton Court, joking with his lords, toying with his mistresses, watching games in the tennis court, and feeding ducks in the royal ponds. Time travelled on, and the 23d of August came. All Quakers imprisoned in the gaols of London and Middlesex were released, because on that day Charles's consort, Queen Catherine, first came "to our royal palace at Westminster." The Thames was covered with boats almost without number. Music floated on the water, and thundering peals roared from huge cannon on the shore. Charles and his queen sailed in an open vessel covered with a canopy of cloth of gold, which was supported by Corinthian pillars wreathed with flowers, festoons, and garlands. This was Saturday.

The previous Sunday had been a day such as England never knew, either before or since.* Hundreds of faithful ministers on that day preached farewell sermons to heart-broken, weeping flocks. Churches were crowded; aisles and stairs were crammed to suffocation; and people clung to the open windows like swarms of bees. It would have been pardonable if the ministers had mingled with the loving exhortations addressed to the distressed crowds before them sentiments of indignation at the legislative act which was the means of their removal. But, instead

* And yet, perhaps this is hardly true. A most pitiful picture might be drawn of the clergymen who, twenty years previously, had been expelled from the same churches by the *ipse dixit* of Oliver Cromwell, whom Bishop Hackett represents as regarding neither parliaments nor patents—neither canons nor scriptures—"in comparison of some new light shining in the lantern of his own head." Men of learning and religion were in many instances succeeded by "mere rhapsodists and ramblers," "cried up as rare soul-saving preachers." Not a few venerable and worthy ministers, expelled by the rough hand of violence, "lingered out their lives, laden and almost oppressed, worried, and worn out with fears, anxieties, necessities, rude affronts, and remediless afflictions." A great deal may be said on both sides of the question.

of that, the discourses were as calm as the pastors had ever preached, and some of them scarcely alluded to the peculiar circumstances of the time.

A week after, on the day after Queen Catherine's jubilant reception, the Act of Uniformity was enforced in all its rigour, and upwards of two thousand ministers, with their families, were ejected from their livings.*

"What a scene," says John Wesley, "is opened here. The poor Nonconformists were used without either justice or mercy; and many of the Protestant bishops of King Charles had neither more religion nor humanity than the Popish bishops of Queen Mary."† "By this Act of Uniformity, thousands of men, guilty of no crime,—nothing contrary either to justice, mercy, or truth,—were stripped of all they had—of their houses, lands, revenues—and driven to seek where they could, or beg their bread. For what? Because they did not dare to worship God according to other men's consciences!"‡

A large majority of the ministers in the Church conformed; and these may be divided into three classes—first, those who had been Presbyterians or Independents, or other sectaries, and who on former occasions had more or less opposed Episcopacy and the Book of Common Prayer; secondly, those who had already conformed to previous changes—passively submitting to their superiors for the time being, be they who they might; and, thirdly, a class of consistent Episcopalians, including—1. such as had been allowed to hold their livings, and to use the Prayer-book even during the Commonwealth; 2. such as had been ejected from their benefices, but had been reinstated since the Restoration; and, 3. such as had been recently ordained, and inducted into livings during the last twelve months. Many of these Conformists—as Tillotson, Gurnall, Stillingfleet, Cudworth, and others—were men of high character; but many others were low, mean, grovelling spirits, who valued the priest's office only because it gave them a piece of bread. In a publication of that period, "the parsonage house" is described "as holding scarcely anything but a budget of old stitched sermons, hung up behind the door, with

* Baxter estimates the number of the ejected and deprived as from 1800 to 2000. Calamy gives it at 2400. A catalogue in Dr Williams's library gives 2257. A manuscript, by Oliver Heywood, gives 2500.

† Wesley's Works, vol. ii. p. 297.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. xi. p. 37.

a few broken girths, two or three yards of whipcord, and perhaps a saw and a hammer to prevent dilapidations." Macaulay, speaking of the rural clergy, says: "Those who could, sported a few Greek and Latin words for the benefit of the squire, and pitched their discourses so as to accommodate themselves to the fine clothes and ribbons in the highest seats of the church, instead of seeking to instruct those of the congregation who had to mind the plough and to mend the hedge." And again, in reference to the clergy in cities and corporations, he writes: "There were men whose parts and education were no more than sufficient for their reading the lessons, after twice conning over. An unlearned rout of contemptible men," says he, "rushed into holy orders just to read the prayers, and who understood very little more of their meaning than a hollow pipe would, made of tin or wainscot." Some idea may be formed of the character of many of the clergy who conformed in 1662, from the fact that three years after, during the great plague in London, instead of firmly remaining at the post of duty when most needed, numbers of the London clergy, like craven spirits, rushed off into the country, leaving their pulpits to be occupied, and their afflicted and dying parishioners to be cared for, by the very ministers who had been ejected by the Act of Uniformity.

The Nonconformist ministers may be divided into several classes:—1. Some were moderate Episcopalians, and would have conformed to the Prayer-book and to the Church government that were in use previous to the Commonwealth, but could not give their unfeigned assent to all things in the Prayer-book as revised by the Convocation of 1661. 2. Some were of no sect or party, but liked what was good in all, without being able to adopt the Prayer-book as prescribed. 3. Some were Presbyterians, of whom Baxter says: "They were the soberest and most judicious, unanimous, peaceable, faithful, able, and constant ministers that he had ever heard or read of in the Christian world." 4. Some were Independents, of whom the same writer says: "They were serious, godly men, some of them moderate, little differing from the Presbyterians, and as well ordered as any; but others were more raw and self-conceited, and addicted to separations and divisions, their zeal being greater than their knowledge." Perhaps Baxter was hardly an unprejudiced witness respecting either the Presbyterians or the Independents.

Amongst the ministers expelled by the Act of Uniformity, there were not a few of the most remarkable men that the Church in this country has ever had. Most of them were excellent scholars, judicious divines, faithful and laborious pastors; men full of zeal for God and religion, undaunted in the service of their Master, diligent students, and powerful preachers. Especially were they men of great devotion, pleading for almost hours together at the throne of grace, and there inspired with faith, and love, and zeal, which raised them to the highest rank of heroes, and made them willing, not only to lose their livings, but to suffer even martyrdom itself, rather than to prove traitorous to Christ and to the liberties of His Church. More than two thousand of such men were ejected from the Church benefices of this country in 1662, and a passing glance at some of them may help the reader to remember others.

In this portrait-gallery, let us point to Edmund Calamy, who studied at the rate of sixteen hours a-day, was one of the most popular preachers in the capital, and whose week-day lectures were attended by such numbers of the nobility, that there were seldom fewer than sixty carriages at his church's gates. William Bates, of graceful mien and comely person, generally reputed one of the best orators of the age,—his voice charming, his language neat, his style pleasing, his learning vast, his piety conspicuous, and his "Harmony of the Divine Attributes" alone sufficient to immortalise his memory. Samuel Annesley, who declared he remembered not the time when he was not converted; the descendant of a good family, whose estate was considerable; a man of a large soul, of flaming zeal, and of extensive usefulness; faithful in the ministry for fifty-five long years, during the last thirty of which he enjoyed an uninterrupted assurance of God's forgiving love; a man of moderate learning, though an LL.D., but a most devoted Christian, and the father of Susannah Wesley. Joseph Caryl, a man of great piety, learning, and modesty, and author of a marvellous Commentary on the Book of Job, originally published in eleven volumes quarto. Thomas Brookes, a very affecting and useful preacher, rich in homely phrases and familiar figures, and whose "Apples of Gold" are still prized as much as ever. Matthew Pool, who spent ten years upon his "Synopsis Criticorum," in five volumes folio, and who, during its compilation, used to rise between three and four o'clock every morning.

Thomas Manton, a man of great learning, judgment, and integrity, and respected by all who knew him; endowed with extraordinary knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; his sermons clear and convincing; his delivery natural, eloquent, quick, and powerful; his piety answerable to his doctrines; and, to say nothing of his other publications, which were very numerous, his discourses, including those on the 119th Psalm, published in five volumes folio. Thomas Gouge, who, besides preaching and visiting, catechised his church every morning the year round; seldom merry, and yet never sad; a man who set up and established three or four hundred schools in Wales, which, to a great extent, were supported by himself. Thomas Watson, eminent in the gift of prayer, a hard student, a popular preacher, and author of "A Body of Divinity," in the shape of sermons on the "Assembly's Catechism." John Goodwin, learned, clear-headed, and fluent; a thorough Arminian, and the author of "Redemption Redeemed." John Owen, whose proficiency in learning was such, that he was admitted to the University when he was a child only twelve years old; and who pursued his studies with such diligence that, for several years, he allowed himself but four hours' sleep a-night; tall in stature, affable in temper, charitable in spirit, and a friend of peace; a man of enormous learning, and whose labours as a minister were almost incredible; eminent for piety, an excellent preacher, and whose writings are almost enough to fill a library. Stephen Charnock, who spent most of his time in his study, except on Sundays, when, by his sermons in the pulpit, he showed how well he had employed the week; a man of strong judgment and lively imagination; well skilled in the Hebrew and Greek of the Old and New Testaments; a recluse, whose library was burnt in the great fire of London, and who was writing his discourses on the "Attributes of God," when a peaceful death removed him to heaven. Thomas Harrison, of whom Lord Thomund used to say, "He had rather hear Dr Harrison say grace over an egg, than hear the bishops pray and preach." John Flavel, an unwearied student, with an immense amount of both divine and human learning; a plain but popular preacher, and the well-known author of "Husbandry Spiritualised." Isaac Ambrose, who, once a year, for the space of a month, retired to a hut, in a wood near Preston, and, avoiding all human converse, devoted himself to religious contemplation. Richard Alleine, pious, prudent, diligent, and whose

well-known practical writings have been blessed to thousands. Joseph Alleine, of solid intellect and great piety; a man whose imprisonment for preaching hastened his death at the early age of thirty-five, and whose "Alarm to the Unconverted" has been read by myriads. Oliver Heywood, who, besides his stated work on Sundays, one year preached more than a hundred times, kept fifty fast days and nine days of thanksgiving, and, in the service of his Master, travelled fourteen hundred miles. Philip Henry, who preached a funeral sermon for every person whom he buried, but whose excessive modesty was such that he would publish nothing that he wrote. John Howe, who, when a young minister in Devonshire, used to perform divine service on fast-days (at that time frequent) as follows:—At nine in the morning he prayed for a quarter of an hour; then read the Scriptures and expounded three quarters of an hour; then prayed an hour; then preached another; then prayed half an hour, after which the people sung for fifteen minutes; he then prayed an hour more, preached another, and then, with a prayer of half an hour, concluded a service which lasted from nine in the morning until a quarter past three in the afternoon;—John Howe, in person tall and graceful; with a piercing but pleasant eye; singularly great in ministerial qualifications; his power in prayer marvellous, and his writings too well known to need description. And last, but not least, Richard Baxter, a man to whom Lord Chancellor Clarendon offered a bishopric, and whom Judge Jeffries, another government official, addressed thus:—"Richard, Richard! thou art an old knave. Thou hast written books enow to fill a cart, every one of them as full of sedition, indeed treason, as an egg is full of meat;"—Baxter, "a man," says his contemporary, William Bates, "with a noble negligence of style; for his great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words;"—a man animated with the Holy Spirit, and breathing celestial fire to inspire life into sinners dead in trespasses and sins; a man whose expulsion from the Church gave him time to write and publish most of his invaluable books, some of which have been the means of converting more men from sin to holiness than any other books in modern times;—a man, says Dr Barrow, "whose practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted;"—a man holding constant communion with God, and living in charity with men;

whose life was a living sermon, and his conversation becoming a citizen of heaven.

Such were some of the two thousand martyr spirits who were ruthlessly ejected from their churches and their homes in 1662, and, for years afterwards, had to live in obscurity and silence; yea more, not only were they doomed to silence, but to suffering. In 1664 the "Conventicle Act" was passed, which provided that "every person above sixteen years of age present at any meeting of more than five persons besides the household, under a pretence of any exercise of religion, in other manner than is the practice of the Church of England, shall, for the first offence, be sent to gaol three months, till he pay a £5 fine; for the second offence, six months, till he pay a £10 fine; and for the third offence, be transported to some of the American plantations." The execution of this execrable act, to a great extent, was committed to the king's soldiers, who broke open every house where they fancied a few Nonconformists might be gathered together for sacred service. Close, unhealthy prisons were soon crammed with conscientious victims, men and women, old and young; whilst others were ruined in their estates by bribing the corrupt and rapacious myrmidons of a licentious and persecuting court. If a few of these persecuted people happened to be driven to madness and insurrection, as now and then occurred, they were strung up on the gallows, a dozen at a time, the *good-natured* king rarely exercising the prerogative of mercy on their behalf.

In 1665 the plague broke out in London, and swept away one hundred thousand of the inhabitants. The poltroon ministers in the city churches fled, and the ejected ministers re-entered the forsaken pulpits, and tried to benefit the terror-stricken people, whom the new-fledged parsons had cowardly left to the pestilence and the devil. The parliament, frightened from London, met in Oxford; but there, instead of showing kindness to the men who were so bravely doing duty in the city of the plague, they actually added injury to injury, by passing the execrable "Five Mile Act," which provided that it should be a penal offence for any Nonconformist minister to teach in a school, or to come within five miles (except as a traveller in passing) of any city, borough, or corporate town, or of any place in which he had preached or taught since the passing of the Act of Uniformity, unless he had pre-

viously taken the oath of non-resistance—to wit, that it is not lawful, under any pretence whatever, to take arms against the king, or against those that are commissioned by him, or to endeavour to make any alteration of the government, either in Church or State.

What was the result of all this? An amount of suffering was endured far greater than had been inflicted, in the same space of time, since the days of the Reformation. Jeremy White collected a list of the names of Nonconformist sufferers, amounting to sixty thousand, and he states that of these sufferers five thousand died in prison. Informers skulked about cottages, garrets, back rooms, stables, and outhouses, wherever they suspected a handful of quiet Christians might be assembled to hear the word of life from the lips of an old pastor; and despite curtains, shutters, trap-doors, and other simple devices to ensure safety, seized on their hapless victims, and dragged them before merciless magistrates, who, with savage joy, doomed them to deep, dark prisons. Some, in search of godly quietude, wandered far away, others secreted themselves in fields and woods, but the more daring remained in their former dwellings, and met to worship God, in consequence of which they were led off to prison. Students, deprived of all means of subsistence, had to lay aside their books, take up the spindle, earn a few pence at knitting, and live on the coarsest fare. Closets, beds, tubs, hay-ricks, and other places of concealment were haunted by ruffian soldiers, pointing a musket at the door, or thrusting a sword into the straw. Troopers made no scruple of rushing into a good man's house, while he was at prayer, and of threatening, while holding a pistol at his head, to blow out his brains, unless he ceased from his whining cant.

These were days of terror and of suffering such as Englishmen now seldom think about. Thousands of disgraceful and heart-rending facts might be stated. Suffice it to remark that, notwithstanding the severity of law, the harshness of magistrates, the brutality of constables, the deceitfulness of spies, and the rudeness of the rabble, Nonconformists continued as numerous as ever. Their firmness of character, their plain, practical, and awakening ministry, the purity of their morals, their strict observance of the Sabbath, their care for family religion, their succession of able and learned preachers, the disgust at the persecutions they were

made to suffer, and the reaction produced by pushing High Church principles to an unbearable extent, in the short space of a quarter of a century, brought about the English Revolution of 1688, and obtained for them that which is the birthright of all, liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

Samuel Wesley began life amid all this royal perfidy, legalised suffering, and national excitement, and, as we shall shortly see, he was the son of one of the two thousand persecuted and martyr-like ministers, ejected from their churches and their homes by the tyrannic Act of Uniformity, passed and enforced in the year 1662.

[This chapter has been compiled principally from Baxter's *Life and Times*; Calamy's *Nonconformist Memorials*; Calamy's *Life and Times*; Macaulay's *History*; Knight's *Pictorial History of England*; Stoughton's *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*; Alleine's *Memorial*, by Stanford; Gauden's *Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ Suspiria*, 1659; Walker's *Sufferings of the Clergy*, 1714; *History of Modern Enthusiasm*, 1757; Rees' *Encyclopædia*; *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and from tracts and pamphlets too numerous to mention.]

CHAPTER II.

PARENTAGE—1600-1670.

SAMUEL WESLEY was the grandson of Bartholomew Wesley, rector of Catherston, in Dorsetshire. Bartholomew Wesley was born about the year 1600; but the place of his nativity is not known. He received a university education, a fact indicating, to some extent, the circumstances and the religious opinions of his parents. Calamy informs us, that, while at the university, Bartholomew Wesley applied himself to the study of physic, as well as of divinity; and the knowledge which he acquired was of great advantage to him in the dark days of his after life. In 1640 he was inducted to the rectory of Charmouth, and in 1650 to that of Catherston; both of which he held until his ejection in 1662.

Catherston and Charmouth are villages in the south-western extremity of Dorsetshire; the former about a mile distant from the latter. Catherston stands on an eminence, and Charmouth in the valley adjoining it.

Like many others, Bartholomew Wesley was driven from his rectories by the Act of Uniformity. After this, though he preached occasionally, he had to support himself and his family by the practice of physic. Calamy says he used a peculiar plainness of speech, which hindered his being an acceptable, popular preacher.

Nothing more is known of Bartholomew Wesley, except a story related by Lord Clarendon, embellished by Anthony á Wood, and retailed by Rapin and others. Wood calls him "the fanatical minister, sometime of Charmouth, in Dorsetshire," who, in 1651, had like to have "betrayed Lord Wilmot and King Charles II., when they continued incognito in that county;" but Wood was a man so bitter and intolerant that all he says ought to be received with caution.

The substance of the story, as given by Clarendon and others,

is as follows:—After the battle of Worcester, in 1651, Charles II. wished to escape to France, and it was privately arranged that the vessel, in which he was to cross the channel, was to be near Charmouth on the night of September 22d. A man was sent to engage for that night the best rooms at the inn, at Charmouth, for a pretended wedding party, who wished to stop to refresh themselves and horses. All this being arranged, the party arrived at the inn, and were secretly assured that about midnight the long boat, to take them to the vessel, would be at the place appointed. The King and Lord Wilmot waited at the inn; and Colonel Wyndam and his man Peters went to the sea-side to look for the boat; but looked all night in vain. At break of day, they urged the king and Lord Wilmot quickly to escape from Charmouth for fear of treachery. The reason why the boat had not come, as was agreed, was, because the wife of the man who had charge of it suspected what was transpiring, and locked her husband in his chamber, and would on no account permit him egress. While Lord Wilmot was obtaining this information, a blacksmith of the name of Hammet* was requested to shoe his lordship's horse. The smith, from the fashion of the shoes, declared they had been made, not in the west, but in the north. Henry Hull,† the hostler, hearing this, stated that the company, of whom Wilmot was one, had sat up all night, and kept their horses saddled. It was at once inferred, that the party who had departed from Charmouth that morning, was either the king and his friends, or some of the king's distinguished adherents. The hostler ran to Wesley, the minister, to ask his counsel. Wesley was at his morning exercise, and being somewhat long-winded, he wearied the hostler's patience, who returned to the blacksmith's shop without telling his suspicions. In the meantime, Lord Wilmot had mounted and was gone. The blacksmith then told Wesley what had happened. Wesley went to the inn to make further inquiries, and then went with the blacksmith to a magistrate, to give him information, that warrants might be issued for the apprehension of the suspected fugitives. No warrants, however, were obtained; but a party pursued the king and his friends as far as Dorchester, where the pursuit was ended.

Such is the story in brief; but Clarendon adds that the day when Charles and his friends were waiting at Charmouth was a

* *Gent. Mag.*, 1785, p. 427.

† *Ibid.*

day appointed by the Parliament for a solemn fast, and that a fanatical weaver, who had been a soldier in the parliamentary army, was preaching against the king in a little chapel fronting the obscure inn where his Majesty was stopping; that, to avoid suspicion, Charles was among the weaver's audience; and that this was the man who hastened to make inquiries at the inn, and that applied to a magistrate for a warrant.

John Wesley's account of this affair is short. Like Clarendon, he states, that the minister was a weaver, but omits to state that he was his own great-grandfather. He writes:—"Pursuing his journey to the sea-side, Charles once more had a very providential escape from a little inn, where he set up for the night. The day had been appointed by parliament a solemn fast; and a weaver, who had been a soldier in the parliament army, was preaching against the king in a little chapel fronting the house. Charles, to avoid suspicion, was himself among the audience. It happened that a smith, of the same principles with the weaver, had been examining the horses belonging to the passengers, and came to assure the preacher that he knew by the fashion of the shoes, that one of the strangers' horses came from the north. The preacher immediately affirmed that this horse could belong to no other than Charles Stuart, and instantly went with a constable to search the inn. But Charles had left before the constable's arrival." *

In a book entitled "*Miraculum Basilicon*," by A. J., (Abraham Jennings,) and published in 1664, there are a few other particulars, in reference to this occurrence, possessed of some interest. The author calls Wesley "the puny parson of the place, and a most devoted friend to the parricides;" and designates the "morning exercise" in which he was engaged, when the hostler went to him, "his long breathed devotions, and bloody prayers." Wesley having heard the rumour about the travellers at the inn, went to the inn-keeper to make inquiries. The writer says, "Wesley, this pitiful dwindling pastor, posted to the innkeeper, and with most eager blusterations, catechised him concerning what travellers he had lodged that night; from whence they came, and whither they would, and what they did there? His suspicions being increased by the answers he received, he went to Dr Butler, the next justice of the peace, requiring a warrant, by which he would stir up the people and the soldiers to endeavour the apprehending of the king. The

* Wesley's *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 230.

justice having refused to grant the warrant, Captain Massey, who was in the neighbourhood, at once gathered as many soldiers as he was able, and followed after the fugitives in the way towards London, until he came to Dorchester; but, by a most divine instinct, the king turned another way, crossing the country a little beyond Bridport, and so escaped from his pursuer Captain Massey!"

Dr A. Clarke has, with great earnestness, endeavoured to make it clear that Bartholomew Wesley was not the man who tried to entrap King Charles; and, if Clarendon's description was literally correct, that the preacher was a weaver, there would be presumptive evidence in favour of Clarke's opinion. It is quite possible that Wesley might have been in the parliamentary army; but, remembering that he received his education in the Oxford University, it is hardly probable that he was a weaver previous to his removal there. The only reasonable way to reconcile Wood's statement that Wesley was the minister who informed, with Clarendon's assertion that the preacher was a weaver, is to suppose that, on account of the smallness of his income, Bartholomew Wesley, like many others, found it expedient to have a spinning-wheel, and to weave his home-spun yarns into home-made cloths. Admit such a supposition, and all difficulties vanish. Wesley might have been in the army; in such a sense, he might be a weaver; and he might be preaching, and might have King Charles in his Charmouth congregation on the day already mentioned.

Dr A. Clarke seems to be exceedingly unwilling to admit that Bartholomew Wesley was guilty of an act so mean as that of giving information concerning King Charles. As to the meanness or merit of such an act, opinions will differ. We submit, however, that, in such a case, Bartholomew Wesley only did his duty. Probably he had been in the parliamentary army, and had fought for the emancipation of his country from the perfidious thralldom of the Stuart dynasty. He was now, by the authority of the parliamentary government, the appointed clergyman of the two parishes where he lived. Only twelve days before the attempt of Charles to escape to France from Charmouth, the Parliament had issued a proclamation, threatening those who concealed the king, or any of his party; and on the very day when it was arranged for the plan of escape to France to be carried out, that proclamation had been published two miles hence, in the adjacent town of

Lyme. Let the reader bear all this in mind, and he will probably conclude that Dr A. Clarke's earnest attempt to clear Bartholomew Wesley from the charge of giving information concerning the royal fugitive, was a labour of love not needed; and that the whole affair, instead of injuring the rector's fair fame, is greatly to his credit. He performed a duty, a painful duty; and for that he deserves, not excuses, but thanks.

Bartholomew Wesley, after being ejected from his church at Charmouth, still continued to reside in the same village, and obtained a livelihood by the practice of physic. He made no secret of the fact that it was his intention and wish to capture the king; and he jokingly told a gentleman that he was "confident that, if ever the king came back, he would be certain to love long prayers; for if he (Wesley) had not been at that time longer than ordinary at his devotion, he would have surely snapt him."* His were days of strife, of change, of oppression, and of sorrow. He lived to a good old age, for he survived his son John, whose death, in 1678, greatly affected him. He preached when he could, and administered physic as far as he was able. A local historian writes concerning the persecuted dissenting Christians in the west: "They were rewarded with cruel mockings, bonds, and imprisonments; they wandered in deserts and in mountains; and in dens and caverns they hid themselves. In the solitudes of Pinney they offered up their prayers, in a dell between two high rocks, which have ever since been called the *Whitechapel* Rocks; and in an old house at Lyme there was recently discovered an ingeniously concealed oak staircase, capable of admitting only one person at a time, which led to a small apartment that had been used as a chapel." In such places, Bartholomew Wesley joined his fellow-Christians in the worship which they stealthily presented to Almighty God. He and they have long since passed to the place where "the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Samuel Wesley's father was John, the son of the ejected rector of Catherston and Charmouth, and was born about the year 1636. Even when a boy at school, he had deep religious convictions and feelings, and began to keep a diary of God's gracious dealings with him, which, with slight interruptions, was continued to the end of

* *Gent. Mag.*, 1785, p. 487.

life. That diary is now unfortunately lost, or at all events, if it still exists, no one seems to know where it is.

At the usual age he was entered a student of New Inn Hall, Oxford, and, in due course of time, became M.A. At the period when John Wesley matriculated, Dr John Owen, who was Cromwell's chaplain, filled the office of vice-chancellor, and treated the young student with marked attention. Wesley was serious and diligent, and applied himself particularly to the study of the Oriental languages, in which he made great proficiency.

Owen was elected vice-chancellor in 1652, when John Wesley was about sixteen years of age, and continued in that high office until 1657, which was a few months before Wesley's entrance upon the ministry; so that it is not improbable that Wesley was at Oxford during the whole of the administration of this distinguished man. Owen found this ancient seat of learning in an exceedingly disordered state. After withstanding a long siege, it had recently been obliged to surrender to the parliament forces, and was now left so desolate, that men said, in their excitement, it looked like Jerusalem in ruins. Broken trees and trampled gardens were seen on every hand. Sculptured stones and pictured windows lay shattered in the grass. Nettles and brambles were growing round the walls of colleges. The rich wood-work in the quadrangle of Christ Church had been used for fuel. The halls had been turned into granaries, and the colleges into barracks. So long had Mars usurped the place of Minerva, and students been accustomed to exchange cap for helmet, that the scholastic air had almost vanished. "There was little or no education of youth. Poverty, desolation, and plunder,—the sad effects of war,—were to be seen in every corner." To correct these evils, to curb the licentiousness of the students, to maintain the rights of the university, and to support its character for piety and learning, Owen set himself most vigorously, and he happily succeeded. Anthony Wood describes him as putting down "formalities and all ceremony, and as undervaluing his office by going in *quirpo*, like a young scholar, with powdered hair, snake-bone band strings, a large set of ribbons pointed at his knees, and Spanish leather boots, with large lawn tops, and his hat mostly cocked." Be this as it might, among the students Owen acted as a father. While he discountenanced and punished the vicious, he encouraged and rewarded the modest and the indigent; and, under his administration, the

whole body was reduced to good order, and contained a great number of excellent scholars, and persons of distinguished piety.

At this period, Dr Thomas Goodwin, distinguished for his piety, learning, and industry, was president of Magdalen College; George Porter, a man of great gravity, integrity, self-denial, and charity, was Proctor of the University; Stephen Charnock was Senior Proctor of New College; Ralph Button, whom Baxter describes as "a most humble, worthy, godly man," was Canon of Christ Church; Thomas Cole, the tutor of John Locke, was Principal of St Mary's Hall; John Howe was Fellow of Magdalen College; Dr Edmund Staunton, who was a living concordance to the Bible, was President of Corpus Christi College; Dr Wilkins, who married Cromwell's sister, and was afterwards Bishop of Chester, was Warden of Wadham College; Dr Pococke, the greatest Oriental scholar of his time, was Professor of Arabic. Such were some of the celebrated men who flourished at Oxford at the time when John Wesley was a student there. And among others who, during the same period, received a part or the whole of their academical education in the same university, may be mentioned:—William Penn, the celebrated Quaker; Philip Henry, the eminent Nonconformist; Dr South, so famed for his pungent sermons; Sir Christopher Wren, the illustrious architect; Dr Whitby, the learned commentator; Launcelot Addison, father to Joseph Addison, the essayist; Bishops Spratt and Compton, who afterwards ordained John Wesley's son Samuel; Bishops Crewe, Cartwright, Hopkins, Ken, Fowler, Wiseman, Hooper, Marsh, Huntingdon, Cumberland, Turner, and Lloyd; Joseph Alleine, subsequently John Wesley's companion in tribulation; and Charles Morton, in whose academy Samuel Wesley was afterwards a student. Such were the distinguished contemporaries of Samuel Wesley's father in Oxford University.

John Wesley first began to preach, among seamen, at Radipole, a village about two miles distant from Weymouth. In the meantime the vicar of Winterborn-Whitchurch died, and the people of that parish wished Wesley to preach to them as a minister on probation. He went; his ministry and life gave satisfaction to those who invited him; he passed his examination before Cromwell's "Triers;" and, by the trustees, was appointed to the living. This was in May 1658, when he was about twenty-two years of age.

Winterborn-Whitchurch is a village about five miles from Blandford, in Dorsetshire, and in 1851 had a population of 595. The income of the living, when it was presented to John Wesley, was about £30 a year. He was promised an augmentation of £100 a year; but, on account of the many changes in public affairs which soon afterwards took place, the promise failed in its fulfilment.

Oliver Cromwell died four months after John Wesley was inducted into this church benefice, and, as a consequence, the nation became more distracted than ever. There was, in fact, no efficient civil government, and the ruling power fell wholly into the hands of the army. In 1659, what was called "The Committee of Safety" was appointed, consisting of twenty-three persons, who were ordered "to endeavour some settlement of affairs, by preparing such a form of government as might best comport with a free state and commonwealth." The Committee agreed upon seven articles:—1. That there should be no kingship. 2. That there should be no single person as chief magistrate. 3. That the army should be continued. 4. That there should be no imposition upon conscience. 5. No House of Peers. 6. That the legislative and executive powers should be in distinct hands. 7. That parliament should be elected by the people. Inextricable confusion followed. Plotter plotted against plotter, and the cleverest man was he who could best act the hypocrite. General Monk and his army wished for the restoration of Charles; but parliament and the Committee of Safety *seemed* to be opposed to this; and there was serious danger of a recurrence of civil wars. John Wesley was a young man, twenty-three years of age, and for a time appears to have sympathised with the party represented by the Committee of Safety, and to have taken up the sword on their behalf; but when Charles was restored to the throne of his fathers, in 1666, the young soldier quietly submitted, and took the oath of allegiance and loyalty.

Some of these facts are referred to in the following conversation, taken from Calamy's "Nonconformists' Memorial." It may be added, that Dr Gilbert Ironside had been rector of Steepleton and Abbas Winterborn, parishes in Dorset, not far from where the Wesleys lived. He was consecrated Bishop of Bristol about the time of Charles's restoration, and was informed that John Wesley would not read the Liturgy. The bishop expressed a de-

sire to see him. Wesley waited upon his lordship ; and the following catechetical interview took place :—

Bishop. What is your name ?

Wesley. John Wesley.

Bishop. There are many great matters charged upon you.

Wesley. Mr Horloch acquainted me that it was your lordship's desire that I should come to you ; and, on that account, I am here to wait upon you.

Bishop. By whom were you ordained ? or are you ordained ?

Wesley. I am sent to preach the gospel.

Bishop. By whom were you sent ?

Wesley. By a church of Jesus Christ.

Bishop. What church is that ?

Wesley. The church of Christ at Melcombe.

Bishop. That factious and heretical church !

Wesley. May it please you, sir, I know no faction or heresy that that church is guilty of.

Bishop. No ! Did not *you* preach such things as tend to faction and heresy ?

Wesley. I am not conscious to myself of any such preaching.

Bishop. I am informed by Sir Gerrard Napper, Mr Freak, and Mr Tregonnel of your doings. What say you ?

Wesley. I have been with those honoured gentlemen, who, being misinformed, proceeded with some heat against me.

Bishop. There are the oaths of several honest men, who have observed you.

Wesley. There was no oath given or taken. Besides, if it be enough to accuse, who shall be innocent ? I can appeal to the determination of the great day of judgment, that the large catalogue of matters laid against me are either things invented or mistaken.

Bishop. Did not you ride with your sword in the time of the Committee of Safety, and engage with them ?

Wesley. Whatever imprudences in civil matters you may be informed I am guilty of, I shall crave leave to acquaint your lordship, that his Majesty having pardoned them fully, and I having suffered on account of them since the pardon, I shall put in no other plea, and waive any other answer.

Bishop. In what manner did the church you speak of send you to preach ? At this rate everybody might preach.

Wesley. Not every one. Everybody has not preaching gifts and preaching graces. Besides, that is not all I have to offer to your lordship to justify my preaching.

Bishop. If you preach, it must be according to order; the order of the Church of England, upon an ordination.

Wesley. What does your lordship mean by an ordination?

Bishop. Do not you know what I mean?

Wesley. If you mean that spoken of Rom. x., I had it.

Bishop. I mean that. What mission had you?

Wesley. I had a mission from God and man.

Bishop. You must have it according to law, and the order of the Church of England.

Wesley. I am not satisfied in my spirit therein.

Bishop. Not satisfied in your *spirit*! You have more new-coined phrases than ever were heard of! You mean your conscience, do you not?

Wesley. *Spirit* is no new phrase. We read of being "sanctified in body, soul, and *spirit*;" but, if your lordship like it not so, then I say, I am not satisfied in my *conscience*, touching the ordination you speak of.

Bishop. Conscience argues science, science supposes judgment, and judgment reason. What reason have you that you will not be thus ordained?

Wesley. I came not this day to dispute with your lordship; my own ability would forbid me to do so.

Bishop. No, no; but give me your reason.

Wesley. I am not called to office, and therefore cannot be ordained.

Bishop. Why, then, have you preached all this while?

Wesley. I was called to the *work* of the ministry, though not to the *office*. There is, as we believe, *vocatio ad opus, et ad munus*.

Bishop. Why may you not have the office of the ministry? You have so many new distinctions! oh, how you are deluded!

Wesley. May it please your lordship, because they are not a people that are fit objects for me to exercise office-work among them.

Bishop. You mean a gathered church: but we must have no gathered churches in England; and you will see it so. For there must be unity without divisions among us; and there can be no unity without uniformity. Well, then, we must send you to your

church, that they may dispose of you, if you were ordained by them.

Wesley. I have been informed by my cousin Pitfield and others, concerning your lordship, that you have a disposition opposed to morosity. However you may be prepossessed by some bitter enemies to my person, yet, there are others, who can and will give you another character of me. Mr Glisson hath done it; and Sir Francis Fulford desired me to present his service to you, and, being my hearer, is ready to acquaint you concerning me.

Bishop. I asked Sir Francis Fulford whether the presentation to Whitchurch was his. Whose is it? He told me it was not his.

Wesley. There was none presented to it these sixty years. Mr Walton lived there. At his departure, the people desired me to preach to them; and, when there was a way of settlement appointed, I was by the trustees appointed, and by the Triers approved.

Bishop. They would approve any that would come to them, and close with them. I know they approved those who could not read twelve lines of English.

Wesley. All that they did I know not; but I was examined touching gifts and graces.

Bishop. I question not your gifts, Mr Wesley. I will do you any good I can; but you will not long be suffered to preach, unless you do it according to order.

Wesley. I shall submit to any trial you shall please to make. I shall present your lordship with a confession of my faith, or take what other way you please to insist on.

Bishop. No; we are not come to that yet.

Wesley. I shall desire several things may be laid together, which I look on as justifying my preaching:—1. I was devoted to the service from my infancy. 2. I was educated thereto, at school and in the university.

Bishop. What university were you of?

Wesley. Oxon.

Bishop. What house?

Wesley. New Inn Hall.

Bishop. What age are you?

Wesley. Twenty-five.

Bishop. No sure, you are not!

Wesley. 3. As a son of the prophets, after I had taken my degrees, I preached in the country, being approved of by judicious, able Christians, ministers, and others. 4. It pleased God to seal my labour with success, in the apparent conversion of several souls.

Bishop. Yea, that is, it may be, to your own way.

Wesley. Yea, to the power of godliness, from ignorance and profaneness. If it please your lordship, to lay down any evidences of godliness agreeing with the Scriptures, and if they be not found in those persons intended, I am content to be discharged from my ministry; I will stand or fall by the issue thereof.

Bishop. You talk of the power of godliness such as you fancy.

Wesley. Yea, the reality of religion. Let us appeal to any commonplace book for evidences of grace, and they are found in and upon these converts.

Bishop. How many are there of them?

Wesley. I number not the people.

Bishop. Where are they?

Wesley. Wherever I have been called to preach—at Radipole, Melcombe, Turnworth, Whitchurch, and at sea. I shall add another ingredient of my mission. 5. When the church saw the presence of God going along with me, they did, by fasting and prayer, in a day set apart for that end, seek an abundant blessing on my endeavours.

Bishop. A particular church?

Wesley. Yes, my lord. I am not ashamed to own myself a member of one.

Bishop. Why, you mistake the apostles' intent. They went about to convert heathens, and so did what they did. You have no warrant for your particular churches.

Wesley. We have a plain, full, and sufficient rule for gospel worship in the New Testament, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles.

Bishop. We have not.

Wesley. The practice of the apostles is a standing rule in those cases which were not extraordinary.

Bishop. Not their practice, but their precepts.

Wesley. Both precepts and practice. Our duty is not delivered to us in Scripture only by precepts, but by precedents, by promises, and by threatenings mixed. We are to follow them as they followed Christ.

Bishop. But the apostle said, "This speak I ; not the Lord"—that is, by revelation.

Wesley. Some interpret that place, "This speak I now, by revelation from the Lord"—not the Lord in that text before instanced, when he gave answer concerning divorce. May it please your lordship, we believe that "cultus non institutus est indebitus."

Bishop. It is false.

Wesley. The second commandment speaks the same: "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image."

Bishop. That is, forms of your own invention.

Wesley. Bishop Andrews, taking notice of "non facies tibi," satisfied me that we may not worship God but as commanded.

Bishop. You take discipline, church government, and circumstances for worship.

Wesley. You account ceremonies a part of worship.

Bishop. But what say you? Did you not wear a sword in the time of the Committee of Safety, with Demy and the rest of them?

Wesley. My lord, I have given you my answer therein; and I further say, that I have conscientiously taken the oath of allegiance, and faithfully kept it hitherto. I appeal to all that are around me.

Bishop. But nobody will trust you. You stood it out to the last gasp.

Wesley. I know not what you mean by the last gasp. When I saw the pleasure of Providence to turn the order of things, I did submit quietly thereto.

Bishop. That was at last.

Wesley. Yet many such men are trusted, and now about the king.

Bishop. They are such as, though on the parliament side during the war, yet disown those latter proceedings; but you abode even till Haselrig's coming to Portsmouth.

Wesley. His Majesty has pardoned whatever you may be informed of concerning me of that nature. I am not here on that account.

Bishop. I expected you not.

Wesley. Your lordship sent your desire by two or three messengers. Had I been refractory, I need not have come; but I

would give no just cause of offence. I think the old Nonconformists were none of his Majesty's enemies.

Bishop. They were traitors. They began the war. Knox and Buchanan in Scotland, and those like them in England.

Wesley. I have read the protestation of owning the king's supremacy.

Bishop. They did it in hypocrisy.

Wesley. You used to tax the poor Independents for judging folks' hearts. Who doth it now?

Bishop. I did not; for they pretended one thing and acted another. Do not I know them better than *you*?

Wesley. I know them by their works, as they have therein delivered us their hearts.

Bishop. Well, then, you will justify your preaching, will you, without ordination according to the law?

Wesley. All these things laid together are satisfactory to me, for my procedure therein.

Bishop. They are not enough.

Wesley. There has been more written in proof of preaching of gifted persons, with such approbation, than has been answered by any one yet.

Bishop. Have you anything more to say to me, Mr Wesley?

Wesley. Nothing. Your lordship sent for me.

Bishop. I am glad I heard this from your own mouth. You will stand to your principles, you say?

Wesley. I intend it, through the grace of God; and to be faithful to the king's majesty, however you deal with me.

Bishop. I will not meddle with you.

Wesley. Farewell to you, sir.

Bishop. Farewell, good Mr Wesley.

This is a long conversation, but it is instructive and useful, (1.) as casting light upon Church and State affairs, immediately after the restoration of Charles; and (2.) as furnishing several interesting facts in the history of Samuel Wesley's father. Passing over the first, we learn that John Wesley, like his grandson of the same name, was a man of sound sense and pluck. He adhered to the parliament and to the Commonwealth to the last moment; but when he saw that the Commonwealth was doomed, and that the nation was resolved to restore the Monarchy, like a man of sense, he laid aside his sword and quietly submitted. His continued

firm adherence to the cause of the Commonwealth—"to the last gasp," as the bishop put it—brought him into trouble after the king's return ; but royal clemency was properly exercised towards him, and there was an end of the affair. He had preferred another kind of government ; but now that Charles, by the voice of the nation, was seated upon the throne, Wesley took the oath of allegiance, and faithfully kept it.

It is further evident, from the foregoing conversation, that John Wesley was never episcopally ordained. From his infancy, he was devoted, by his God-fearing father, to the work of the ministry, and was educated in reference thereto, both at school and at college. After leaving the university, he became a private member of the church at Melcombe. Authorised by the voice of that church, he began to preach at Melcombe, Radipole, Turnworth, Whitchurch, and other places. By the bishop's own admission, he was a man of "gifts." His preaching was the means of converting sinners in every place in which it was exercised. Just at this juncture, Mr Walton, who had been vicar of the parish of Winterborn-Whitchurch for fifty-six years, died. Several able ministers, and judicious Christians, thought young Wesley to be a suitable successor. The trustees, in whom the presentation was vested, offered him the living. Cromwell's Triers, after having examined him as to his fitness for the ministerial work, gave him their certificate of approval. And then, as the last step previous to his induction—instead of ordination by bishops or by presbyters—the church of which he was a private member set apart a day for fasting and prayer, to seek an abundant blessing on his labours. Thus qualified, called, and commissioned, the young evangelist, at the age of twenty-two, entered upon his ministerial charge ; and, laying aside the Liturgy, which had probably been used by the previous vicar during his long ministry of fifty-six years, he introduced the Presbyterian, or the Independent, form of worship, and thereby involved himself in trouble. Some of the parishioners—as Sir Gerrard Napper, Mr Freak, and Mr Tregonel—disliked the change ; and, as soon as a bishop was appointed after the Restoration, they lodged a complaint against their young minister. It is extremely doubtful whether the bishop at that time—1661—had authority to interfere in a case like Wesley's ; but he wished to see him ; and, accordingly, knowing that there was no violation of law in his abandonment of the Liturgy during the last

three years, Wesley, with a fearless heart and unflinching face, sought the bishop's presence, and held the characteristic conversation already given.

It is somewhat difficult to determine what Wesley means by his "gathered church," and by its members not being fit for him "to exercise *office-work* among them." The probability is, that at the death of old Mr Walton there were no really converted persons in the parish, and, therefore, none whom Wesley deemed to be fit and proper persons to receive the sacrament. His endeavour, for the past three years, had been to get the people converted, and, to some extent, he had succeeded; but still, he even yet scarce considered his new converts, the members of his gathered church, sufficiently instructed and established to justify him in his exercising "*office-work*" among them; or, in other words, to justify him in administering to them the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If this is not the meaning of this technical and obscure verbiage, the reader, so far as the writer is concerned, must be content to remain in ignorance.

Wesley's conversation with Bishop Ironside occurred sometime during the year 1661. About the same period he was arrested, on the Lord's-day, as he was coming out of church, and was carried to Blandford, where he was committed to prison. The reason of this arrest was exactly the same as that which brought him before the Bishop of Bristol. He would not use the Liturgy. His enemies had accused him to the bishop, but without effect, for the bishop as yet was really without jurisdiction. King Charles had appointed bishops to several dioceses, and the Liturgy had been introduced into those churches, where the ministers were avowedly Episcopalians; but it was not until the month of November 1661, that the prayer-book was revised by Convocation; and it was not until August 1662, that the use of it was made binding. It is true that, during the summer of 1660, a bill had been passed by parliament giving power to expel from church livings every incumbent that had not been ordained by an ecclesiastic; and by this act, John Wesley might have been expelled from the living of Winterborn, Whitchurch. But this was not the ground taken by Sir Gerrard Napper and the other parishioners who were inimical to his person and ministry. Probably they were not aware, or were not in a position to prove, that he had not received ordination; and hence their illegal plot to imprison and expel him, because, in

conducting divine service in his church, he persisted in his refusal to use the Book of Common Prayer.

It was within two years after the restoration of Charles II. that Wesley was arrested and committed to Blandford gaol on such a charge. Sir Gerrard Napper had been his most furious enemy, and the most forward in committing him ; but after Wesley had lain in prison for a length of time, Sir Gerrard broke his collar bone, and, perhaps thinking that the disaster had happened as a judgment upon him for his cruelty to the young minister, he requested some of his friends to bail him, and told them, that if they refused, he would give bail himself. At length, by an order of the Privy Council, dated July 24, 1661, it was directed that he should be discharged from his then imprisonment, upon taking the oaths of supremacy and allegiance. He was taken accordingly before a magistrate, who, for some reason, declined administering the oaths, but issued a warrant, dated July 29, 1661, commanding him to appear before the judges of the assizes, to be holden at Dorchester, the 1st of August following.

He has recorded in his diary the goodness of God in inclining a solicitor to plead for him, and in restraining the wrath of man, so that even the judge, though a man of sharp temper, spoke not an angry word. The sum of the proceedings, as given in his diary, is as follows :—

Clerk. Call Mr Wesley of Whitchurch.

Wesley. Here.

Clerk. You were indicted for not reading the common prayer. Will you traverse it?

Solicitor. May it please your lordship, we desire this business may be deferred till next assizes.

Judge. Why till then?

Solicitor. Our witnesses are not ready at present.

Judge. Why not ready now? Why have you not prepared for a trial?*

Solicitor. We thought our prosecutors would not appear.

Judge. Why so, young man? Why should you think so? Why did you not provide them?

* It will be seen, from the above dates, that two days only elapsed between the issuing of the warrant against John Wesley and the commencement of the assizes. No wonder that he was not prepared for trial.

Wesley. May it please your lordship, I understand not the question.

Judge. Why will you not read the Book of Common Prayer?

Wesley. The book was never tendered to me.

Judge. Must the book be tendered to you?

Wesley. So I conceive by the act.

Judge. Are you ordained?

Wesley. I am ordained to preach the gospel.

Judge. From whom?

Wesley. I have given an account thereof already to the bishop.

Judge. What bishop?

Wesley. The Bishop of Bristol.

Judge. I say, by whom were you ordained? How long is it since?

Wesley. Four or five years since.

Judge. By whom then?

Wesley. By those who were then empowered.

Judge. I thought so. Have you a presentation to your place?

Wesley. I have.

Judge. From whom?

Wesley. May it please your lordship, it is a legal presentation.

Judge. By whom was it?

Wesley. By the trustees.

Judge. Have you brought it?

Wesley. I have not.

Judge. Why not?

Wesley. Because, I did not think I should be asked any such questions here.

Judge. I would wish you to read the common prayer at your peril. You will not say, "From all sedition and privy conspiracy; from all false doctrines, heresy, and schism. Good Lord, deliver us!"

Clerk. Call Mr Meech.

Meech. Here.

Clerk. Does Mr Wesley read the common prayer yet.

Meech. May it please your lordship, he never did, nor he never will.

Judge. Friend, how do you know that? He may bethink himself.

Meech. He never did; he never will.

Solicitor. We will, when we see the new book, either read it, or leave our place at Bartholomew tide.

Judge. Are you not bound to read the old book till then? Let us see the act.

The act was handed to the judge, and while he was reading it, another cause was called; and John Wesley was bound over to the next assizes. He came joyfully home, and preached each Lord's-day, till August 17, 1662, when he delivered his farewell sermon to a weeping audience, from Acts xx. 32; "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and the word of his grace."

Such is the account given by Dr A. Clarke; an account taken, in substance, from Calamy. Some of the dates are perplexing and doubtful. Clarke states that this odd sort of assize trial took place in August 1661; and yet from the last remark of the Solicitor,—“When we see the new book we will either read it, or leave our place at Bartholomew tide,” it is clear that the “new book” was, to say the least, already sanctioned; and that the Act of Uniformity was already passed, fixing Bartholomew tide as the time when every possessor of a church living must either use the “new Book” of Common Prayer, or be ejected from his church. Admit this, and then it is undeniable that Wesley was tried at the assizes, not in 1661, but in 1662; inasmuch as the “new book” was not prepared by Convocation before November 1661; and the Act of Uniformity, making the use of it binding, was not passed before the 19th of May 1662.* John Wesley was kept in prison up to within a month of the mournful 24th of August, when he and two thousand more were ruthlessly ejected from their churches and their homes. At the very utmost, he would not have the opportunity of preaching on more than three Sundays in his church, before Sir Gerrard Napper and his other enemies had their wishes gratified, by seeing him finally expelled. There are some other difficulties in the account given by Calamy and Clarke; but, in a life like this, they are scarcely worth noticing.

Little more remains to be said concerning Samuel Wesley's father. Where he spent the first six months after his ejection from his benefice, we have no means of knowing. Probably, however, he remained in the same village, where he had spent the last four years, inasmuch as it was here that his son Samuel was

* Calamy says Wesley was arrested in the beginning of 1662.

born, only four months after the youthful minister and his wife were cast out of their vicarage.

On February 22, 1663, when Samuel Wesley was only nine weeks old, his father and his mother removed to Melcombe. Before their arrival, their old enemy, Sir Gerrard Napper, and seven other magistrates, by some stretch of authority, had turned out of office the mayor and aldermen of the borough, and had put into their place others more subservient to their will. Accordingly, when young Wesley and his wife, with their infant child, reached Melcombe, they found that the new corporation had made an order against their settlement in the town; and that if they persisted in settling there, a fine of £20 was to be levied upon the owner of the house in which they lived, and five shillings per week upon themselves. Wesley waited upon the mayor and some others, pleading that he had lived in Melcombe previously; and offering to give security for his proper behaviour; but all was of no avail, for, a few days afterwards, another order was drawn up for putting the former one into execution.

These violent proceedings drove John Wesley and his family from the town, where, a few years before, he had lived beloved by all who knew him. He now went to Ilminster, Bridgewater, and Taunton, in all of which places, the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, treated him with great kindness, and where he preached almost every day.

The author of "Joseph Alleine: his Companions and Times," states that, from the 11th of March 1663 to the beginning of May in that year, John Wesley was the "enthusiastic fellow-labourer" of Joseph Alleine. Mr Sandford adds—"He" (Wesley) "preached almost every day, dividing his time between Mr Alleine's people at Taunton and Mr Norman's at Bridgewater; he also occasionally ministered to congregations of Baptists and Independents at both places."

Alleine was one of the two thousand ministers ejected in 1662; but he, at once, began to preach in his own house, and in surrounding villages and towns, and generally delivered from seven to fourteen sermons every week. He knew that, at any moment, he might be dragged to prison, and this made him all the more diligent and earnest in improving the time he had.

Mr Norman, mentioned above, was another of the ejected ministers. He had good natural abilities, and a considerable stock

of learning, and was an acceptable preacher. With Alleine, and many others, he was sent to prison for venturing to preach the gospel of his Lord and Master. "Sirrah," said Judge Foster, when Norman was arraigned before him in 1663, "Sirrah, do you preach?" "Yes, my lord," said Norman. "And why so, sirrah?" "Because I was ordained to preach." "How was you ordained?" "In the same way as Timothy." "And how was that?" "By the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Norman was sentenced to pay a fine of £100, and to lie in prison till the fine was paid. As he was being taken to Ilchester Gaol, the officers called at the house of the High Sheriff. "Where is now your God?" tauntingly asked the Sheriff's wife. "Have you a Bible?" asked Norman. "Yes," said she. "Bring it," said Norman. Being brought he read Micah vii. 8, 9, 10. The poor woman seemed to be paralysed with fear, and immediately retired; and the dealings of God with the Sheriff's family, not long after, caused this text to be remembered.

This happened in the very month that John Wesley left his friends Alleine and Norman, for before that month of May in 1663 expired, both Norman and Alleine were confined in Ilchester Gaol. When Alleine started off to prison, both sides of the streets of Taunton were lined with his weeping friends, and many followed him several miles on foot, and made such lamentations after him that they well-nigh broke his heart. Arriving at the prison gates, and finding the gaoler absent, he took the opportunity of preaching before he entered. He was clapped up in the Bridewell chamber, over the common gaol, where he found his friend Norman, who had been committed a few days before him. In this low, miserable garret, these godly companions of John Wesley spent both day and night for many months. There were imprisoned with them, in the same room, fifty Quakers, seventeen Baptists, and also thirteen other ministers, all arrested, like themselves, for the high crimes of preaching and praying. The atmosphere was stifling. The summer sun struck fiercely on the roof all day, and so low was the covering of the building, that at night, when lying on their mattresses, the prisoners could touch the glowing tiles. Gasping for life, they had sometimes to break the windows, or to remove a tile for the purpose of obtaining air. Night and day they were compelled to listen to the songs, the curses, and the clanking chains of the felons in the cells below; and if they ventured out of their deadly vapour-bath

into the prison court, they were met by the sights of the loathsome and pestilential wretchedness of the criminals that crossed their paths.*

It was by a narrow escape that John Wesley was not put into the same prison as his friends Alleine and Norman.

John Wesley having spent about six weeks at Bridgewater, Taunton, and Ilminster, a gentleman who had a house at Preston, near Weymouth, offered to allow him to live in it without paying rent. Thither, therefore, he removed his young wife and their infant child in the beginning of May 1663, and thus avoided imprisonment with his friends whom he left behind. Excepting a temporary absence, shortly to be noticed, he continued to reside at Preston until his death in 1678.

At one time he strongly wished to go as a missionary to Surinam, a settlement in Guiana; and at another time, to Maryland, in America—but in neither instance was his wish accomplished. Probably the advice of his friends, and the expense of such a journey, presented difficulties which he found impossible to surmount.

For awhile he seems to have been obliged to give up preaching; and as there was no public worship except that of the Church of England, in which the Liturgy was used, he was considerably troubled at being debarred from joining in sanctuary service; but, by reading Mr Philip Nye's "Arguments for the Lawfulness of hearing Ministers of the Church of England," his scruples concerning the Liturgy were so far removed that he was able, with a safe conscience, to attend the church service.

At length he began to preach in private to a few good people in Preston, and occasionally at Weymouth, and at other places contiguous. After some time, he had a call from a number of serious Christians at Poole to become their pastor. He consented, and continued in that capacity while he lived, administering to them all the ordinances of God as opportunity offered. In consequence, however, of the Oxford Five Mile Act, passed in 1665, he was often put to great inconvenience. Notwithstanding all his prudence in managing his meetings, he was frequently disturbed, several times apprehended, and four times imprisoned—once at Dorchester for three months, and once at Poole for half a year; and once, at least, he was obliged to leave his wife, his family, and his

* Sandford's *Joseph Alleine, &c.*

flock, and for a considerable time to hide himself in a place of secrecy. Again and again, the handful of godly people meeting in the house of Henry Saunders, mariner, of Melcombe, were arrested for being present at a conventicle, and were fined, imprisoned, or otherwise punished. Dr Calamy adds, that John Wesley "was in many straits and difficulties, but was wonderfully supported and comforted, and was many times very seasonably and surprisingly relieved and delivered. Nevertheless, the removal of many eminent Christians into another world, who had been his intimate acquaintance and kind friends, the great decay of serious religion among many professors, and the increasing rage of the enemies of real godliness, manifestly seized on and sunk his spirits; and he died, when he had not been much longer an inhabitant here below than his blessed Master was, whom he served with his whole heart, according to the best light he had." Application was made to the vicar of Preston to have him buried in the church; but the application was refused; and, in the churchyard, no stone tells where his ashes lie, nor is there any monument to record his worth.

From the concluding sentence of Dr Calamy, it would seem that John Wesley died about the early age of thirty-three or thirty-four. He left behind him two sons, Samuel and Matthew, and a faithful wife, who remained his widow for about half a century.

Limited space forbids further details concerning Samuel Wesley's father; in fact, further details do not exist. John Wesley, though young in years, evinced a mind elevated far above the common level, even of those who have had the advantages of a collegiate education. He was no unthinking zealot or timid changeling. He had made himself master of the controverted points between the Established Church and Dissenters, and his opinions, being founded upon conviction, were held with the fidelity of a martyr's grasp. To say nothing of other facts, his interview with the Bishop of Bristol displays the same sincere and zealous piety, the same manly sense, and the same heroic yet respectful boldness, which distinguished his son Samuel and his grandsons John and Charles in after years. Dr A. Clarke adds, that from the same conversation the reader may learn two important facts:—1. That the grandfather of the founder of Methodism was a lay-preacher. 2. That he was an itinerant evangelist. Indeed we find in John Wesley's history an epitome of the Methodism

which sprang up, through the instrumentality of his grandsons John and Charles; his mode of preaching, matter, manner, and success, bearing a striking resemblance to theirs and to their co-adjutors.

We can only add, that a portrait of John Wesley is published in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1840. The hair is long, and parted in the middle. The forehead is capacious, the nose large, the eyes soft and sweet, the face without whiskers, and the general expression of the countenance highly sad and thoughtful.

Before leaving the parentage of Samuel Wesley, a few words must be said concerning his mother. She was the daughter of one distinguished man and the niece of another. Her father was the Rev. John White, one of the three assessors of the Assembly of Divines, and long known as "the Patriarch of Dorchester;" a man whom Fuller describes as being grave without being morose, and who, in the course of his ministry, "expounded the Scriptures all over and half over again;" a man who had the command of his own passions and of the purses of his parishioners; for he was so much beloved by his people that, "he could wind them up to what height he pleased."

John White was born at Stanton St John, in December 1574. After two years of probation at Winchester school, he was admitted perpetual fellow of New College, Oxford, in 1595. Here he took his degrees in arts, was admitted into holy orders, and became a frequent preacher in and about Oxford. In 1606, he obtained the rectory of Trinity Church, Dorchester. About 1624, he and some of his friends projected the new colony of Massachusetts, in New England, and, after surmounting many obstacles, secured a patent. The object was to provide an asylum for the persecuted fugitives, who were not able to conform to the ceremonies and discipline of the Church of England. White himself had scruples respecting the worship and proceedings of the same church; and, in 1630, was prosecuted by Archbishop Laud, in the High Commission Court, for preaching against Arminianism and the ceremonies. He was also a sufferer during the civil wars, a party of horse in the neighbourhood of Dorchester, under the command of Prince Rupert, having plundered his house and taken away his library. On this occasion, he made his escape to London, and was appointed minister of the Savoy. In 1640, he was one of the learned divines

directed to assist in "a committee of religion," appointed by the House of Lords. In 1643, he was chosen to be one of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Two years after, he succeeded the ejected Dr Featley as rector of Lambeth, and had assigned to him the use of his predecessor's library, until his own, carried away by Prince Rupert's soldiers, should be returned to him. In 1647, he was offered the wardenship of New College but refused it, and, as soon as possible, returned to his old flock at Dorchester, for whom he had the greatest affection, and where he had passed the happiest of his days. He died suddenly at Dorchester, July 21, 1648, when John Wesley, who married his daughter, was only twelve years old. John White was a man of great zeal, activity, and learning; and even Anthony à Wood allows that he was "a most moderate Puritan." By his wisdom the town of Dorchester was greatly benefited, and, for many years, he exercised a patriarchal influence among the inhabitants; but, towards the end of his days, factions and adverse opinions crept in among his flock, and a new race sprung up, who either knew not or refused to acknowledge the worth of this godly man. "Of such disrespect," says Fuller, "he was sadly and silently sensible." He married the sister of Dr Burgess, the great Nonconformist, who afterwards, being reclaimed to the Church of England, wrote in its defence. The works of John White are—1. "A Commentary upon the First Three Chapters in Genesis;" 2. "A Way to the Tree of Life, discovered in sundry Directions for the Profitable Reading of the Scriptures;" 3. "A Digression concerning the Morality of the Fourth Commandment," printed and published with the preceding; 4. A few sermons.

The mother of Samuel Wesley was the daughter of this distinguished man. Probably she was his youngest child, as there is evidence to show that she survived her father for more than sixty years.

She was the niece of another man of mark, the celebrated Dr Fuller. Thomas Fuller was, in many respects, a remarkable character. At the age of twelve, he was deemed fit for the studies of the university, whither he was sent accordingly. When he was three-and-twenty he was collated to a prebend's stall in Salisbury Cathedral. Soon after this, he became rector of Broad Windsor, in Dorsetshire. At the age of thirty-three, he removed to London, where he officiated as lecturer in the Savoy Church in the Strand. After this, his life was chequered, but his pen was

hardly ever idle. In succession he published his "Pisgah Sight of Palestine," "Church History of Britain," "A Defence of it against Dr Heylin," "History of the Holy War," "History of the Worthies of England," all in folio. He was appointed chaplain to Charles II., was created doctor of divinity, and bid fair to become a bishop, when he was seized with fever, of which he died in 1661. His funeral was attended by two hundred of the clergy, showing the high estimation in which he was held. His writings possess much learning, wit, and humour, with an elaborate display of quaint conceit, a quality highly thought of at the time he wrote, and which, in him, appears to have been natural. He was an almost unequalled punster, but sometimes met his match. Once, when attempting to play off a joke upon a gentleman, whose name was Sparrowhawk, he received the following retort:—"What," said Fuller, who was very corpulent, "what is the difference between an owl and a sparrowhawk?" "It is," replied the other, "*fuller* in the head, *fuller* in the body, and *fuller* all over." Thomas Fuller was not only eminent for his learning, his writings, and his wit, but also for his prodigious memory. He could repeat five hundred strange and unconnected words after twice hearing them, and a sermon verbatim after he had heard it once. He undertook, after passing from Temple Bar to the farthest end of Cheapside and back again, to mention all the signs over the shop doors, in regular succession, on both sides of the streets, and to repeat the names both backwards and forwards; and this almost incredible task he performed with the utmost exactness.

Such, then, were the father and the uncle of Samuel Wesley's mother. Of herself little is known. As already shown, her father died when she was young. Her uncle died when her husband was suffering imprisonment for conscience' sake. Her husband died about the early age of thirty-four, leaving her nothing but his holy example, his loving prayers, and at least two young children. How she obtained a living, in the early years of her widowhood, there is no evidence to show; but, in her later years, she was obliged to depend on the little help of £10 per annum, which her son Samuel was accustomed to squeeze out of his sadly too small Epworth income. The whole of her married life was one continued scene of persecution; and the forty years of her long and dreary widowhood, was an unceasing struggle with poverty and its attendant pain. She was alive in 1710.—See

Clarke's "Wesley Family," vol. ii. p. 144. Would that we knew more of her suffering history!

[The facts in this chapter have been collected from Beal's *Fathers of the Wesley Family*, Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, Anthony Wood's *Athena Oxoniensis*, Orine's *Life of Dr John Owen*, Chalmers's *General Biographical Dictionary*, Fuller's *Worthies of England*; and also from other books and tracts mentioned in the chapter itself.]

CHAPTER III.

SCHOOL DAYS—1662-1683.

SAMUEL WESLEY was born at Winterborn-Whitchurch, at the close of the year 1662. He was educated at the Free School, at Dorchester, by Mr Henry Dolling, to whom, out of respect, he dedicated the first work that he published.* Dorchester Free School was built by Edward Hardy, of Wyke, near Weymouth, about the year 1579. Young Wesley remained here until he was a little more than fifteen years of age, when he was sent to an academy in London. He continued in London until August 1683, when he had nearly arrived at the age of twenty-one.

Perhaps there is no period in English history more pregnant with painful interest than the first twenty-one years of Samuel Wesley's life. He came into the world four months after that dark day of St Bartholomew, when his father, and his grandfather, and more than two thousand other godly ministers of Christ, were ejected from their churches, and driven from their homes. When he was yet a child, the great plague of London swept away one hundred thousand of its inhabitants; and the great fire made nearly the whole city a sightless heap of cinders, from the Tower to Temple Bar. Taking advantage of the confusion produced by these terrible events, the Covenanters in the West of Scotland rose up, and demanded redress of their grievances, and the removal of Episcopacy. Archbishop Sharp, exchanging the crosier for the sword, took the field against them. Forty were killed on Pentland Hills, and one hundred and thirty taken prisoners. Ten were hanged in Edinburgh upon one gibbet,

* Mr Dolling became master of Dorchester School in 1664, and held the office until 1675. He was LL.B of Wadham College, Oxford; and translated "The Whole Duty of Man" into Latin. The work, a copy of which is in the Dorchester School Library, was licensed in 1678.—HUTCHIN'S *History of Dorsetshire*.

and thirty-five more were sent back to the west of Scotland, and there hanged, in front of their own dwellings, the ministers of the Established Church declaring them damned to all eternity for their rebellion, and the archbishop employing his Episcopal genius in the invention of a new infernal instrument of torture, and spending his hours out of the sacred pulpit, not so much in sacred exercises as in studying how to make "the boots" excruciate the surviving associates of those executed men. Clarendon, who had much to do with the passing of the Act of Uniformity, was now deprived of the great seal, was accused of treason, and obliged to flee to France for safety. Sir Matthew Hale, Bishop Wilkins, and others, made an effort to have the Presbyterians comprehended in the Established Church, and to secure toleration for all the other dissenting sects; but the orthodoxy of parliament was as intolerant as ever, and it was a common saying at the time, that whoever proposed new laws about religion ought to do it with a rope round his neck. The bishops and High Churchmen continued to preach the divine right of kings and passive obedience, and the court plunged more deeply than ever into debauchery and sin.

In 1668, the Puritans and apprentices about Moorfields took the liberty to pull down a number of brothels, and then to say, with some significance, that having demolished the little ones they ought not to spare the great one at Whitehall. Colonel Blood, the villainous desperado, after nearly murdering Lord Ormond, and after stealing the crown of England from the Tower, was not only pardoned, but admitted into the privacy and intimacy of the court, became a personal favourite of the king, was constantly seen about the palace, and had granted to him, for his base and bloody deeds, an estate in Ireland, worth £500 a-year. In 1673 the Test Act was passed, which provided that all who refused to take the oaths, and to receive the sacrament, according to the rites of the Church of England, should be debarred from public employment. In 1677, Charles not only permitted his nephew, the Prince of Orange, to come to England, but hastily made up a marriage between the prince and his niece, Mary, the elder daughter of James, the Duke of York, by Anne Hyde,—Charles alleging that this measure was forced upon him by the jealous fears of the nation, particularly since the Duke of York had declared himself a Papist.

In 1678, the year in which Samuel Wesley was sent to school in London, the popish plot of Titus Oates was developed. Titus was the son of an Anabaptist ribbon weaver. After acting as chaplain to one of Cromwell's regiments in Scotland, he took orders in the Church of England, and obtained the living of Hastings in Sussex.* Whilst discharging his sacred duties, he was twice convicted of perjury. He was then appointed chaplain on board a man-of-war, but was dismissed with added infamy. Two years before the development of his plot, he was admitted into the service of the popish Duke of Norfolk, and suddenly became a Papist. He was now sent to a Jesuits' College in Spain, from which, in a short time, he was disgracefully expelled. He recrossed the Pyrenees, and presented himself, as a mendicant, at the gate of the Jesuit College, at St Omar. Here, for a while, he lived among the students and novices, and was then cast out with shame, and was obliged to return to England without cassock and without coat. It so happened that, just at this juncture, Dr Tonge, rector of St Michael's, in Wood Street, London, was a great Protestant alarmist. Titus obtained access to him, worked upon his fears, and, by his means, was brought before the Privy Council. Here, in a new suit of clothes and a sacerdotal gown, he alleged that, by the authority of the pope, a number of Jesuits were plotting the murder of the king, and of his brother James, the Duke of York; that these Jesuits had £60,000 a-year at their command, to assist in carrying out their murderous intentions; that repeated commissions had been given to shoot the king, and that the queen's physician had been urged to poison him; that a wager had been laid that the king should eat no more Christmas pies, and that if he would not become R. C. (Rex Catholicus) he should no longer be C. R. (Charles Rex;) that the Jesuits had been the authors of the great fire in London, and were now concocting a plan for the burning of Westminster, Wapping, and all the ships upon the river; and that, with the full expectation that all these things would be done, the pope had already, by a secret bull, filled up all the bishoprics, and had made appointments to most of the high offices of state.

The Privy Council heard these statements of Titus Oates with astonishment. Meanwhile, Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, who had taken Oates' depositions, suddenly disappeared from his house in

* Dryden's *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. notes, p. 54. 1760.

Westminster, and was found brutally murdered in a ditch near Primrose Hill. The ghastly body was exhibited to many thousands, who shuddered and wept at the sight of one whom they deemed to be a Protestant martyr. The funeral was attended by an immense procession, having at its head seventy Protestant divines, in full canonicals. The panic spread, and Protestants, of all classes, conformists and non-conformists, royalists and republicans, considered their lives in danger. Titus Oates was summoned before parliament. Lord Stafford and four other Catholic lords were committed to the Tower. Common prisons were crammed with Papists. The House declared "that there hath been, and still is, a damnable and hellish plot, contrived and carried on by the popish recusants, for assassinating the king, for subverting the government, and for destroying the Protestant religion." Titus Oates was proclaimed the saviour of the nation, and had a pension awarded of £1200 a-year. Charles yielded to the storm of agitation, and Catholics were expelled from their seats in both Houses of Parliament,—seats which were not regained, by their successors, for one hundred and fifty years afterwards, until 1829. Titus Oates went further still, and even accused the Queen of England, at the bar of the House of Commons, of high treason, declaring that he himself had heard her say, "I will no longer suffer such indignities to my bed; I am content to join in procuring his death, and in the propagation of the Catholic faith." This accusation, however, was allowed to drop; but Stayley, the banker, Father Ireland, the Jesuit, and five other persons, were tried and convicted, and then executed at Tyburn for their complicity with the alleged popish plot.

Space forbids further details, except to add, that as soon as King James ascended the throne, Titus Oates was thrown into prison, and was tried for perjury in reference to his assertions respecting the popish conspiracy. He was found guilty, and was sentenced to be stripped of his clerical habit, to be pilloried in Palace Yard, to be led round Westminster Hall, with an inscription over his head declaring his infamy, to be pilloried again in front of the Royal Exchange, to be whipped from Aldgate to Newgate, and, after an interval of two days, from Newgate to Tyburn. If he survived this horrible infliction, he was to be kept close prisoner for life, and, five times a-year, he was to be brought forth from his dungeon, and exposed in the pillory in different parts of London.

The whipping, says Neal, was inflicted with a severity unknown to the English nation. Dr Calamy tells us that he saw Oates at the cart-tail from Newgate to Tyburn, and that his back, fearfully swollen with the first whipping, looked as if it had been flayed. He adds: "Oates was a man of invincible courage, and endured what would have killed a great many others; and yet, after all, he was but a sorry, foul-mouthed wretch." Macaulay says: "Whilst he was being whipped from Aldgate to Newgate, the blood ran down in rivulets, and his bellowings were frightful to hear. When brought out again, to be whipped from Newgate to Tyburn, it was necessary to drag him to Tyburn on a sledge. A person who counted the stripes on this second day, said that they were seventeen hundred." The whipping was so terribly cruel, that it was evidently the intention of the court to kill him; but, by the care of his friends, he recovered. During many months, he remained ironed in the darkest hole in Newgate, sitting whole days, uttering deep groans, with his arms folded, and his hat over his eyes. He lived to the reign of King William, when a pension of about £300 a-year was settled on him,—a sum which he thought unworthy his acceptance, but which he took with the savage snarl of disappointed greediness. About the year 1698, he was restored to his place among the Baptists; but, in a few months, was ejected from their communion as a disorderly person and a hypocrite. He died in 1705.

But to return. Such was the excitement created by Oates's allegations, that, in 1679, one of the first acts of the House of Commons was to pass a resolution, "that the Duke of York, being a Papist, and the hopes of his coming such to the crown, had given the greatest countenance to the present conspiracies and designs against the king and the Protestant religion." The House also voted an address to the king, requesting him to banish all Papists in London twenty miles from its borders, and to put all sea-ports, fortresses, and ships into trusty hands. In the meantime, Charles induced his unpopular popish brother to retire to Brussels; but, before he went, James exacted from the king a formal declaration that the young Duke of Monmouth was illegitimate. The Commons, not satisfied with what they had already done, proceeded with their famous Bill of Exclusion, by which the crown of England was to pass from Charles to the next *Protestant* heir, as if the Duke of York were dead. This bill was

read a second time, when Charles suddenly dissolved parliament.

Whilst all this was going on in England, exciting events were occurring in Scotland. There, dragoons were dispersing field-meetings, and many a moor was made wet with the blood of Covenanters. At one field conventicle, upwards of one hundred men were killed in cold blood. Balfour had mortally wounded Archbishop Sharp; and Russell had finished the work by hacking his skull to pieces; while the rest of their companions retired to a cottage on the moor, and spent the remainder of the day in thanksgiving to Almighty God for the accomplishment of a work so glorious. The Duke of Monmouth was sent, with five thousand troops, to put an end to a state of things like this; and the battle of Bothwell Bridge was fought. Then James, Duke of York, succeeded him, and exercised the functions of a viceroy, under the title of "King's Commissioner."

Shortly after the battle of Bothwell Bridge, a band of the most enthusiastic of the Covenanters rallied round a man called Cameron, a preacher, from whom they derived the name of Cameronians. Cameron affixed to the market-cross of Sanquhar "A Declaration and Testimony of the true Presbyterian, anti-prelatic, anti-erastian, and persecuted party of Scotland." In this document, he renounced and disowned Charles Stuart, and declared war against him as a tyrant and usurper. Cameron, with a mere handful of men, was surprised by three troops of dragoons, and, with his brother and ten of his followers, died fighting. A few escaped with Cargill, another preacher, who, at Torwood, pronounced excommunication against Charles II., king of Scotland, for his mocking of God, his perjury, adultery, incest, drunkenness, and dissembling with both God and man. Cargill was taken prisoner on July 26, 1681, and, with four of his followers, was the next day hanged. Farther proceedings followed. Lord Belhaven was imprisoned; and the Earl of Argyle was committed on the charge of treason, but escaped from a murderous death by escaping from his dungeon. Covenanters, Cameronians, and all who were suspected of associating with them, or of rendering them merciful assistance in their hour of need, were punished. Courts of judicature, with their "boots" and other instruments of torture, were set up, both in the south and west of Scotland. Above two thousand persons were outlawed; and the soldiers were authorised to shoot all delinquents refusing

to renounce Cameron's and Cargill's declarations. Thousands of Presbyterians, who had taken no part with these desperate enthusiasts, began to think of emigrating to America.

In June 1683, the famous Rye-House Plot against Charles's life was unfolded. The Duke of Monmouth immediately absconded, showing a delicate regard for his own safety, and a cowardly disregard for the safety of his friends. William Lord Russell was committed to the Tower. Howard, his relative, was discovered hidden in a chimney; was taken in his shirt, and carried before the Council; where the kneeling, puling, sobbing caitiff made such confessions as led to the immediate arrest of the Earl of Essex, Algernon Sydney, and Hampden, who were sent to join Lord Russell in the Tower. Many others, Scots as well as English, were arrested, and were true, to the edge of the axe, to their friends and party. When Baillie, of Jerviswoode, was offered his life if he would turn evidence, the proud Scot smiled, and said, "They who make such a proposal know neither me nor my country." The steps taken by the authorities produced a different effect upon others. The magistrates of London and of Middlesex were terrified into loyalty, and presented petitions, praying for the suppression of dissenting conventicles; for justice upon "atheistical persons, rebellious spirits, infamous miscreants, and monsters;" and for the condign punishment of those "execrable villains and traitors" convicted of a design against his Majesty's precious life. A month after his arrest, Lord Russell was brought to trial; and, on the same day, the Earl of Essex either committed suicide, or was murdered by the procurement of the king and the Duke of York. The base Howard was the principal witness against Russell. The Earl of Bedford offered to the king £100,000, if he would release his son; but Charles replied, "If I do not take his life, he will soon take mine." And, accordingly, on July 21, attended by Tillotson and Burnett, the unfortunate Russell was led to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and was beheaded. On the same day, the University of Oxford published its decree in support of passive obedience, or the right of kings to govern wrong, without resistance or challenge from their suffering subjects. Seven weeks after, Algernon Sydney was brought to trial before Judge Jeffries, the legal bravo, who was as bold with his law books as Charles's other personal favourite, Colonel Blood, was with pistols, daggers, and dark lanterns. Lord Howard was again the chief witness;

and Sydney, on the 8th of December, was decapitated on Tower Hill.

This brings us down to the time when Samuel Wesley's school days ended; and, with this brief survey of the reign of Charles II., we must content ourselves, only adding a few remarks respecting the morals of this disgraceful period of English history.

The Restoration brought with it a tide, not only of levity, but of licentiousness;—an inundation of all the debaucheries of the French court, in which Charles and his followers had chiefly spent their exile. The passions and tastes of the people, which, under the rule of the Puritans, had been sternly repressed, and, if gratified at all, had been gratified by stealth, now broke forth with ungovernable violence; and, as soon as the check was withdrawn, men flew to frivolous amusements, and to criminal pleasures, with the greediness which long and enforced abstinence naturally produces. Little restraint was imposed by public opinion; and there was no excess which was not encouraged by the ostentatious profligacy of Charles, and of his favourite courtiers. It is an unquestionable, and a most instructive fact, that the years during which the political power of the Anglican hierarchy was in the zenith, were precisely the years during which national virtue was at the lowest point.*

Swearing and profligate conversation were now so prevalent, that a young nobleman or man of family, was accounted no gentleman, that allowed two hours to pass in company without inventing some new modish oath, or without laughing at the fopperies of priests, or without making lampoons and drolleries on the Holy Bible. In the highest ranks, talent was employed in bedizening the carrion carcase, and rouging the yellow cheeks of the foul goddess of wantonness. Worthless actresses, and royal and noble concubines, became the patronesses, and even the wives of the highest nobility. Gaming was a fashionable phrenzy, and a noble house was incomplete without a basset-table. Court ladies became so equivocal in character, that few cared to venture the selection of a wife from among them. Mrs Jenyns, a maid of honour, afterwards Duchess of Tyrconnel, dressed herself like an orange wench, and cried oranges about the streets. Gentlemen arrayed themselves like ladies, and ladies disguised themselves like gentlemen. Duelling was of daily occurrence. Members of Par-

* Macaulay.

liament adjourned to refresh themselves at taverns, from which they returned half drunk to finish their senatorial discussions. Younger sons of good families, heirs of wealthy citizens, and raw young country squires huzzaed for the king, and then broke the king's peace, to show their love for him; scoured the streets in nocturnal bands; stormed taverns; broke windows; wrenched off door-knockers; daubed and defaced tradesmen's signs; routed apple-merchants, fishmongers, and butter-women; attacked and knocked down all chance passengers; and generally ended by a conflict with the watch. Gallantry was general, from the half-fledged stripling fresh from the teacher's rod, to the hoary-headed veteran, whose dim eyes could scarcely see the charms with which his heart was smitten. Foppery in dress resulted, and gallants endeavoured to make themselves irresistible by the newest cut of a French suit, or an enormous fleece of periwig.

Still, amid all this profligate frivolity of the higher classes, the bulk of the community retained much of the old English spirit. Many still adhered to the primitive hours of their forefathers for going to bed, getting up, and transacting business. In diet, notwithstanding the French cookery that had become prevalent, they stoutly stood by old English fare. The people, also, were intensely musical, and almost every person of education could sing by the scale, and play upon some kind of instrument. These were days, when the banks of the Thames were as melodious as the shores of the Adriatic. In the country, the baronial table was still heart of oak, and was laden with the old festive hospitality. Huge sirloins and mighty plum-puddings seemed to laugh to scorn the continental innovations that had become so fashionable in the capital. Country squires gave landlord-feasts to their tenants; while farmers gave harvest-homes and sheep-shearings to their labourers. Swimming, foot-racing, skating, horse-racing, bear and bull-baiting, tennis, and bowls were the people's favourite out-door sports; whilst cards, billiards, chess, backgammon, cribbage, and ninepins, furnished amusement within. On Valentine's day, gentlemen sent presents of gloves, silk stockings and garters, to their fair valentines; and, on the morning of May-day, young ladies, and even grave matrons, repaired to the bright green fields to gather dew to beautify their complexions; while milk-maids danced in the public streets, their milk-pails wreathed with garlands, and a fiddler playing tunes before them.

The age was light-hearted, frivolous, and wicked ; and yet there flourished in it some of the greatest men that England has ever had. Abraham Cowley, replete with learning, was embellishing his poetic pages with all the ornaments that books could furnish him. Samuel Butler, marvellously acquainted with human life, was furnishing, in the grossly familiar versification of his "Hudibras," sententious distiches and proverbial axioms for the use of future generations. Edmund Waller was honoured as the most elegant and harmonious versifier of his time. Dryden's prolific, but extremely licentious pen, displayed a versatility of talent almost without parallel. Otway wrote some of the most pathetic tragedies in the English language, and terminated a miserable life at the early age of thirty-four. Ralph Cudworth was employing his extensive learning and profound philosophy in the production of his "True Intellectual System of the Universe." Henry More was weeping over the miseries of his country, and studying how to check the Atheism of Thomas Hobbes. Isaac Barrow was labouring for words to express the amplitude and energy of his thoughts, often preaching sermons three hours long, and immoderately using tobacco as his "panpharmacon" to compose and regulate his mind. John Bunyan was preaching his wondrous sermons when out of prison ; and, when in it, making tagged laces for a livelihood, and writing his "Pilgrim's Progress." Peter Lely was commanding admiration and acquiring a fortune by his portrait-painting ; and Christopher Wren, a great philosopher, and one of the most eminent of architects, was drawing plans for rebuilding London and St Paul's Cathedral.

It was amid such events, in the midst of such profligacy, and surrounded by such men, that Samuel Wesley spent his school-days' life.

Young Wesley remained at the Free School, Dorchester, until he was fifteen years of age. For some time past, his father had been dead. His mother was a widow, and was poor. The boy, as he himself tells us, "was almost fit for the university," but the difficulty was to find means to send him there. Like his father, and his two grandfathers, he was evidently intended for the Christian ministry ; but, considering the treatment which all the three had experienced at the hands of the Episcopal party, it is scarcely probable that their youthful descendant would, at this early period of his history, feel a wish to enter the ministry of

the Established Church. His father and his grandfathers, though they had all been the occupants of Church livings, were, so far as Episcopacy and the use of the Liturgy are concerned, Dissenters; and there can be no question, that, as a boy fifteen years of age, his sympathies were with them.

But, had it been otherwise, there was little prospect of a youth like him being able to become a minister of the Established Church. To become such, he must receive Episcopal ordination; and to receive that, he must go to the university: but to go there was impossible, for he was without money, and was without Episcopal friends to send him.

His Dissenting friends showed him kindness. Without any application being made to them, either by his mother or by himself, they sent him, at their own cost, to London, for the purpose of being entered at one of their private academies, and of being trained for the Dissenting ministry. He tells us that Dr G. had the care of one of the most considerable of these seminaries, and had promised him tuition; but, on his arrival in London on the 8th of March 1678, he found that Dr G. was just deceased, and so his hope for a time was thwarted.

He was now sent to a grammar-school, where his progress was such, that the master wished him to proceed to the university, and actually promised him a handsome subsistence there. At this crisis, his Dissenting friends again came forward. He was a youth of promise; and, for their own sake, as well as out of respect for his dead father, they were unwilling to have him wrested from them.

At this time, a fund existed, raised by the collections and subscriptions of a certain Dissenting congregation, for the purpose of meeting cases like that of young Wesley. Out of this fund, he was granted an exhibition of £30 a year; and was sent to Mr Veal's academy at Stepney. Wesley says that his relatives considered the offer of the Dissenters to possess greater advantages than the offer which was made to him by the master of the grammar-school to send him to the university, but in what respect it was considered more advantageous we are left to guess.

Edward Veal, the principal of the Stepney Academy, was, in the first instance, a student of Christ's Church College, Oxford, and afterwards of Trinity College, Dublin. He was ordained at Winwick, in Lancashire, August 14, 1657. When he left Ireland,

he brought with him a testimonial of his being "a learned, orthodox minister, of a sober, pious, and peaceable conversation; who, during his abode in the college, was eminently useful for the instruction of youth, and whose ministry had been often exercised in and about the city of Dublin with great satisfaction to the godly, until he was deprived of his fellowship for nonconformity to the ceremonies imposed in the Church, and for joining with other ministers in their endeavours for a reformation." This testimonial was signed by seven respectable ministers, one of whom was the celebrated Stephen Charnock, at that time exercising his ministry in Dublin, and residing in the house of Sir Harry Cromwell. On leaving Ireland, Edward Veal became chaplain to Sir William Waller, in Middlesex, and afterwards settled as a Nonconformist minister at Wapping, and likewise opened the academy at Stepney. He died June 6, 1708, aged seventy-six. Four of his sermons are published in the "Morning Exercises." Dunton says he "was an universal scholar, and a man of great piety and usefulness. His principles were very moderate. He assisted in preparing for the press the posthumous works of Stephen Charnock;" and wrote the annotations on the Epistle to the Ephesians, published in the Commentary of Matthew Poole.

Samuel Wesley was a student in Mr Veal's academy for about the space of two years, during which his tutor read to him a course of lectures on Logic and Ethics. He was now eighteen years of age; and, as he himself tells us, "was a dabbler in rhyme and faction, and had already printed several things with the Party's" (the Dissenters) "imprimatur." His patrons were evidently satisfied with his behaviour and his progress, for, before the two years spent at Veal's academy had expired, he received an additional bonus of £10 per annum from the hands of Dr O(wen,) who encouraged him in the prosecution of his studies, and advised him to have a particular regard to critical learning.

Mr Veal was so annoyed and prosecuted by the neighbouring magistrates that he broke up his academy, and relinquished the office of a tutor. In consequence of this, young Wesley was again cast afloat, and he was now recommended to the academy of Mr Charles Morton, of Newington Green, where he remained until the summer of 1689.

Charles Morton, M.A., of Wadham College, Oxford, was a descendant from an ancient family at Morton, in Nottingham-

shire, the seat of T. Morton, secretary to King Edward III. He was born about the year 1626. His father was rector of Pendavy, (Pendene-Vau?) in Cornwall; and his two brothers, also, were ministers. When about fourteen years of age, his grandfather, who was a staunch royalist, sent him to Oxford, where he was exceedingly studious, and, at the same time, zealous for the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church. He now began, however, to apply himself seriously to the controversy between the Prelatists and the Puritans; and, after mature reflection, joined himself to the latter. While a fellow of the college, he was highly esteemed by Dr Wilkins on account of his mathematical genius. This was no small honour, for Wilkins was the brother-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, was the warden of Wadham College, and, in after years, became the founder of the Royal Society, and, in 1668, was raised to the see of Chester. Morton began his ministry in Oxford, and here for several years he lived as a Conformist. After his ejection by the Act of Uniformity, he resided in a small tenement of his own in the parish of St Ives, and preached privately to a few people in a neighbouring village. Having sustained a large loss by the great fire of London, he removed thither to watch over his affairs. Several of his friends prevailed with him to open an academy at Newington Green. Here he had many pupils, who became exceedingly useful both in Church and State. Scores of young ministers, as well as many others who were eminent for scholarship, were educated by him. He was in all respects an excellent man; but this failed to save him from persecution. During the time that young Wesley was his pupil, he was obliged to leave his school and to hide himself. Wesley writes: "He had once before been excommunicated, and a *capias* issued out against him, on which he was taken. But while in custody of an officer, in whose house he was kept previous to being sent to prison, the officer died; and there being none to detain him, he returned home again. He was now in danger of a second *capias*, on which he used the mediation of my Lady R. to get some respite, and sent his sister several times to London House on the same errand. My Lord of L. promised him all reasonable favour if he would leave Newington Green and his employment; but he could not suffer him to continue in that, because it was so much to the detriment and prejudice of the Established Church, and so much an affront to the laws and universities. This threat caused Mr

Morton to abscond some time at a friend's, absenting himself from us, and leaving the senior pupils to instruct the junior." After about twenty years' continuance in the office of a tutor, he was so harassed with legal processes from the Bishops' Court that he was obliged to relinquish his academy; and, in 1685, two years after Samuel Wesley left him to go to the Oxford University, he went to America, where he was chosen pastor of a church at Charleston, and became vice-president of Harvard College. Here he died in 1697, at the age of about seventy-one. He was a man of a sweet natural temper, and of a generous public spirit, an indefatigable friend, pious, learned, ingenious, useful, and beloved by all who knew him. He published nearly twenty treatises and other works,—all of them, however, compendious, for he was an enemy to large volumes, and used to say, "A great book is a great evil."

Dunton states, that his "high character led many of the persecuted Nonconformists to join him in America. He was the very soul of philosophy, the repository of all arts and sciences, and of the Graces too. His discourses were not stale or studied, but always new; high, but not soaring; practical, but not low. His memory was as vast as his knowledge. He was as far from ignorance as from pride; and, if we may judge of a man's religion by his charity, he was a sincere Christian."

Samuel Wesley himself says: "Mr Morton was an ingenious and universally learned man; but his chiefest excellency lay in mathematics. He had many gentlemen of estate, who paid him well; but he thought more of the glory of God than of his own private profit. He only wished to save himself harmless; and, therefore, if he had little for some, he valued it not, so as it was barely made up by others, and he could send out new ministers to be ordained by presbyters." While, however, Mr Wesley speaks so commendably of Mr Morton, his language is widely different in reference to Mr Morton's pupils. He writes: "The pupils entertained a mortal aversion to the Episcopal order; and there were but very few but what abhorred monarchy itself. The king-killing doctrines were generally received and defended."

On one occasion some of the students went out at midnight to a little hill not far from Newington, and, with a speaking trumpet, alarmed the town, and then, through the trumpet, bellowed scandalous stories respecting the clergyman of the place, the Rev. Mr S.

Those among them who composed the bitterest and most ill-mannered sarcasms on the public prayers and liturgy of the Church, were caressed, hugged, encouraged, and commended by the heads of the Dissenting party, Wesley himself sharing in the applause awarded.

The students, also, were in the habit of reading "the most lewd, abominable books that ever blasted Christian eye;" but it is right to add, that this was done without the knowledge of their tutors.

Mr Morton's was the principal Dissenting academy in the land, containing forty or fifty pupils, and having annexed to it "a fine garden, a bowling-green, a fish-pond, and a laboratory furnished with all sorts of mathematical instruments." *

The two gentlemen under whose care Samuel Wesley was placed in London were men of learning, of piety, and of general excellence; and well would it have been if he had had no worse advisers than these; but he writes: "Some of their (the Dissenters) gravest, eldest, and most learned ministers encouraged me in my silly lampoons, both on Church and State. They gave me subjects, and furnished me with matter; some of them transcribed my writings, and several of them revised and corrected them before they were printed."

Wesley began to write his "silly lampoons" soon after he came to London. Some of his first squibs were thrown at a worthy man, who deserved more respectful treatment, both from him and some others. The Rev. Thomas Doolittle, whom he wantonly attacked, was a man of distinguished merit. Born at Kidderminster in 1630, and educated in the College of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, he was, for nine years, the incumbent of the parish of St Alphage, London. After being ejected by the Act of Uniformity, he opened a boarding school, and, though against the law, a meeting-house in Bunhill Fields. Here he preached to a numerous congregation, and had many seals to his ministry, until at length, on a Saturday, at midnight, the train bands came to arrest him; but he managed to escape. Next morning, while another person was preaching for him, the soldiers rushed into the chapel, and the officer, addressing the preacher, shouted, "I command you, in the king's name, to come down." The preacher replied, "I command you, in the name of the King of kings, not to disturb His worship, but to let me go on." The officer ordered his men to

* *Wesley's Letter from a Country Divine.* Third edit. London: 1706.

fire. The undaunted preacher clapped his hand upon his heart, and said, "Shoot, if you please; you can only kill the body." Great confusion followed, in the midst of which the brave-hearted preacher escaped; but Doolittle's pulpit was pulled to pieces, and the doors of his meeting-house were fastened, and were branded with the king's broad arrow. After this Doolittle opened a private academy at Islington, where, among other distinguished pupils, he had the care of Matthew Henry, the author of the most practical Commentary on the sacred Scriptures ever published; and also of Edward Calamy, the well known writer of the "Nonconformists' Memorials." It was at this time that Mr Doolittle published his work entitled, "The Lord's Last Sufferings," and prefixed to it a copy of Greek verses. Doolittle's academy at Islington, and Veal's at Stepney, seem to have been sworn enemies to each other, and eagerly longed for an opportunity to display their prowess in academic conflict. For want of a more proper subject, they made the verses, prefixed to Doolittle's book, the occasion of the clash of arms; and, as young Wesley was already "celebrated for his vein at poetry," he took, as Dunton tells us, a prominent part in a skirmish, which seems to have been wantonly begun, and not too honourably carried on. The squibs which Wesley published are lost—a thing not to be regretted.

Doolittle was far too good a man to be lampooned by the clever, impertinent striplings belonging to a neighbouring school; but the man whose goods had been seized and sold, and whose house and person had been threatened by persecuting foes, was not likely to be crestfallen on account of the pretentious swagger of young Wesley and his coxcomb companions.

Another of Wesley's lampoons, written while he was at Morton's Academy, was directed against Dr Williams, Bishop of Chichester, a man whom Dunton describes as "of solid worth and distinguished goodness." Wesley says he was requested to write his satire against Williams by a Dissenting minister of no mean fame, and that the occasion of it was as follows:—A man, killed by a mob, had been buried, and Williams had ordered his body to be taken up, that a coroner's inquest might be held upon it. Wesley knew nothing of the affair himself, but obtained full instructions from a minister near Clapham, who also gave the young Horace a guinea or two for encouragement. The lampoon was written, and Dr Williams, together with the whole

order of bishops, abused to the very utmost of the young poet's power, while his juvenile satirical performance, as he tells us, "was sufficiently applauded" by the unwise and dishonourable ministers who had prompted him to undertake such a work. The bishops of that period might not be as praiseworthy as was desirable; but it was a mean action for Christian ministers to do dirty work by proxy, and to employ a young fellow, cleverer than themselves, to write a pasquinade which, perhaps, they had not the ability to write.

All this was discreditable, both to young Wesley and to his prompters; but there was something else, which, but for his own good sense, might have been even worse. In the same year that Samuel Wesley was born, Biddle, "the father of the English Unitarians," died. Biddle had been the master of the Free School of St Mary de Crypt, in Gloucester, and had adopted the Unitarian doctrines respecting the Trinity. Among other works embodying his creed, he published a tract, entitled, "Twelve Arguments, drawn out of the Scriptures, wherein the commonly-received opinion touching the Deity of the Holy Spirit is clearly and fully refuted." The House of Parliament ordered this tract to be burnt by the common hangman, and, for its publication, the writer was doomed to five years' imprisonment. Biddle was repeatedly imprisoned after this, and died September 22, 1662.

He was a man of great ability, and was an unwearied student. It is said that he retained the whole of the New Testament in his memory *verbatim*, not only in English, but in Greek, as far as the fourth chapter of the Revelation. His persecutions made converts to his principles, particularly in London; and from these he formed a distinct and separate society, not only for the purpose of divine worship, but for the free investigation of theological questions. The members of this society were called, from Biddle, *Bidellians*; and, from their agreement in opinion with the followers of Socinus, they were denominated Socinians. The name, however, which most properly characterised their leading sentiment was that of *Unitarians*; and in this way the Unitarian sect in England had its origin.*

It is a disgraceful fact that the life and works of this arch-heretic were in the hands of the pupils of Morton's academy, and that Wesley was actually employed to translate some of those per-

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1790, p. 63, &c.

icious writings, and was promised a considerable gratuity for doing it. He says, "When I saw what it was, I proceeded no farther." He might, however, have proceeded farther, and, like many other juvenile aspirants, whilst dabbling in Socinian works, might have become a Socinian himself; and, instead of becoming an honoured rector of the Established Church, and the father of the greatest reformer of the age, and of the best uninspired hymnist since the days of King David, he might have dwindled down into a cold-hearted sceptic, with a creed composed of negatives, and a life bereft of blessings to those among whom he moved.

There is no intention, in all this, to censure Mr Morton. Twenty years after these proceedings, Wesley, in his pamphlet against Dissenting Academies, does honour both to Mr Morton and himself, by writing thus: "I must, and ever will, do my tutor the justice to assert that, whenever the young men had any discourse of the government, and talked disaffectedly, or disloyally, he never failed to rebuke and admonish them to the contrary, telling us expressly, more than once, that it was none of our business to censure such as God had set over us; that small miscarriages ought not to be magnified, nor severely reflected on, there never having been a government so exact or perfect but what had some of those *neavi* in it. He also cautioned us against writing lampoons and scandalous libels concerning our superiors, and that, not only because it was dangerous so to do, but likewise immoral."

Considering the disgraceful prosecutions to which Mr Morton had been subjected, such a testimony shows him to have been a man of high principle and honour; but Mr Morton, perhaps, was unable to prevent less honourable ministers having access to the students of his academy; or of his students having access to them. Besides, while the bulk of his students were without doubt respectable and virtuous young men, it is not unfair to imagine that, as in other seminaries, so in this, there might be bad characters, who would try to infect the rest. And, in addition to all this, while we hesitate in accusing young Wesley of strictly immoral conduct, we are quite prepared to think, that the exuberance of spirit, liveliness of wit, and adventurous heroism, which seem to be characteristics of the Wesley family, would often hurry him into improprieties, which he doubtless lamented in after life.

Wesley writes, "that some of the gravest, eldest, and most learned of Dissenting ministers encouraged and pushed him on in

his silly lampoons both on Church and State ;" that they "gave him subjects, and furnished him with matter ; that they transcribed, reviewed, and corrected his writings before they were put to press ; and that they taught him to equivocate, by telling him, that, when he was charged with being the author of such publications, he might deny that they were his," because of the "very weighty and honest reason that there might be *some literal* mistakes in the printing." He also adds, that it was from among the most famous of the Dissenting ministers that he "learned this way of writing ;" "that it was in their hands he first saw the lampoons which were then most famous against the Government ; and that he had often heard them repeated by their own lips, oaths and all."

These are weighty charges against the Dissenting ministers of that period ; and we have no means of refuting them. Still, while the allegations of Samuel Wesley, in the main, are doubtless true, it is only common charity to infer that these hot-headed, lampooning ministers were exceptions to the general rule ; and it is only fair, even to them, to remind the reader that the Government and the age against whom the lampoons were written, were almost as corrupt and vile as profligate and abandoned wickedness could make them.

After all, it was a perilous thing for a young, sprightly fellow, like Samuel Wesley, whose father and grandfather had, by the existing Government, been ejected from their livings, reduced to beggary, and hunted to a premature grave, and whose mother, in consequence of such tyranny, was even now pining in some obscure dwelling, crushed with the sorrows of a too early widowhood, and compelled to submit to the humiliation of being, to some extent, dependent upon the charity of her friends ; we say, it was a perilous thing for such a young man to be brought into close connexion with such political parsons. No wonder that he acknowledges that, when he came to Mr Morton's school, "he was forward enough to write lampoons and pasquils ;" "was abundantly zealous in the cause ;" "was fired with hopes of suffering ;" "and often wished to be brought before kings and rulers, because he thought what he did was done for the sake of Christ."

Such were the ministerial tempters of this high-spirited and exceedingly clever youth. In Morton's academy, there were about fifty pupils, many of whom were doubtless as headstrong as him-

self, and at least two of whom were a great deal worse than this, being not only headstrong, but lewd and vicious. Would it have been surprising, if, under such circumstances, Samuel Wesley had fallen into worse errors than what he did? and is it not owing to the prayers of his dead father, the training of his widowed mother, and the restraining grace of God's good Spirit, that, in after life, he was able to tell his enemies, face to face, without fear of contradiction, that, though he was not an "exemplary liver" while at Mr Morton's academy, he was not a "scandalous one?" He admits that he was too keen and revengeful, and that if he thought a person had injured him, he could not forgive such a person, without receiving something which he thought to be satisfaction. That seems to have been one of his greatest crimes; but now all such revengeful feeling was done away; and it was the greatest pleasure of his life to forgive and to oblige an enemy.

Before quitting the "school days" of Samuel Wesley, perhaps it may be interesting to add, that, besides himself, several of his school-fellows rose to great eminence.

For instance, there was Timothy Cruso, "the golden preacher," as he was called, and who was so great a textuary, says Dunton, that he could pray two hours together in Scripture language. Also Obadiah Marriott, who was Dunton's uncle, and for many years officiated as minister at Chiswick, and at Croydon.

John Shower was another of Morton's pupils. He was born at Exeter, and was educated, first in his native city, then at a Dissenting academy at Taunton, and then at Newington Green; was encouraged, by Dr Manton, to begin preaching before he was twenty, and, at twenty-two, was ordained assistant to Vincent Alsop, at Tothill Fields; established a successful lecture against Popery, in Exchange Alley; and, some years afterwards, went abroad, and became lecturer to the English Church at Utrecht and Rotterdam. In 1690 he became assistant to the great John Howe, in Silver Street, London, and finally settled down at the new meeting-house, in Old Jewry, where he continued to preach, with great popularity, until his death in 1715. He was the author of—1. "Serious Reflections on Time and Eternity." 2. "Practical Reflections on the great Earthquakes in Jamaica and Italy," &c. 3. "Family Religion." 4. "The Life of Henry Gearing." 5. "Funeral and Sacramental Discourses." 6. "Winter Meditations," &c. &c. &c. He was a great favourite of John Dunton's, who describes him as "a

popular preacher, with a small shrill voice, and noted for his funeral sermons." In his "Dissenting Doctors," Dunton writes in extravagant and doggerel rhyme:—

"Shower—thy name and nature both agree,
For both, (yes both,) refreshing showers be—
You're Chrysostom, let down from beams on high,
You preach like him, charm with his orat'ry:
So moving are your sermons, that, 'tis clear,
You've brought the rhetoric of angels here;
So pious in your life, meek in your place,
We think you brought up in the schools of grace—
Your pulpit's fragrant, for you preach in flowers,
And when the hearer's truly blest, it—Showers—
Showers, indeed! for both thy tongue and pen,
Have often made our graces spring again."

Another of Wesley's school-fellows was the celebrated Daniel Defoe—the son of a London butcher, and born the year before Wesley was—the master of five languages, and a diligent student of mathematics, natural philosophy, geography, history, and logic; a man who commenced trade as a horse-dealer; but who paid less attention to trade than to politics; and hence, at the age of thirty-one, was bankrupt, and had to compound with his creditors. Trade failing, Defoe turned author, and published several works, which gained him the confidence of King William, and excited great attention. In 1703, he issued his publication entitled, "The Shortest Way with Dissenters," of which more anon. In 1704, he commenced the *Review*, a periodical which extended to nine quarto volumes, and which pointed the way to the *Tatlers*, *Spectators*, and *Guardians* that followed. After this, he was, in more instances than one, employed by the Government, and was granted a Government pension. By his *Family Instructor*, the family of George I. were instructed; his "Robinson Crusoe" is too well known to need description; while his "Captain Singleton," "Moll Flanders," "Religious Courtship," "Cavalier," "Colonel Jack," and "Fortunate Mistress;" his "Journal of the Plague," "Political History of the Devil," and "New Voyage Round the World," if not read now, used to be read by admiring myriads. Defoe was a marvellous man, and something more will have to be said concerning him. He died in poverty, four years before Samuel Wesley died, and was buried in Bunhill Fields, in 1731.

Space forbids any further mention of the school-fellows of young Wesley; and we can only add, that, notwithstanding the dangers

to which he was exposed, and excepting the censurable proceedings already noticed, he left London with an unblemished character, and considerably advanced in classical learning, by the instructions of the two pious and eminent men who acted as his tutors. He had the opportunity of attending the ministry of Stephen Charnock, John Bunyan, and many other of the most popular preachers of the day; and, before he went to Oxford, had taken down many hundreds of their sermons. Though he left the Dissenters, it would be folly to deny that these dissenting sermons greatly enriched his mind, and helped to mould his moral character.

[Besides some of the works mentioned at the close of Chapters I and II., the following have contributed to the contents of the present chapter, viz., Clarke's *Wesley Family*, Dunton's *Life and Times*, Toulmin's *Life of Biddle*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, the Tracts written during the controversy between Wesley and Palmer in 1703-1707, the works mentioned in the course of the chapter, and others.]

CHAPTER IV.

UNIVERSITY DAYS—1683-1688.

SAMUEL WESLEY left the Dissenters in 1683. Why? His son, the Rev. John Wesley, shall answer. His statement is as follows:—

“Some severe invectives being written against the Dissenters, Mr S. Wesley, being a young man of considerable talents, was pitched upon to answer them. This set him on a course of reading, which soon produced an effect different from what had been intended. Instead of writing the wished-for answer, he himself conceived he saw reason to change his opinions; and actually formed a resolution to renounce the Dissenters, and attach himself to the Established Church. He lived at that time with his mother and an old aunt, both of whom were too strongly attached to the Dissenting doctrines to have borne, with any patience, the disclosure of his design. He therefore got up one morning, at a very early hour, and, without acquainting any one with his purpose, set out on foot to Oxford, and entered himself of Exeter College.”

Samuel Wesley's own account is, in substance, the following:—While he was a student in the Dissenting academies in London, Dr Owen wished him and some others to graduate at the universities, on the ground that the Dissenters were expecting the times to change, and that in a little while their party would be looked upon with greater favour, and their pupils be allowed to take university degrees. Owen, however, insisted that on no account whatever ought they to take the oaths and subscriptions.

While Wesley was still in doubt whether to adopt Dr Owen's advice, he began to study for himself the usual arguments for separating from the Church. He writes—“I earnestly implored the divine direction in a business of so weighty a concern, and on which so much of my whole life depended. I examined things over and over, as calmly and impassionately as possible; and the farther

I looked, still the more the mist cleared up, and things appeared in another sort of light than I had seen them in all my life before. So far were the sufferings of the Dissenters at that time from influencing my resolution to leave them, that, I profess, it was a thing which retarded me most of any. The ungenerosity of quitting them in their meaner fortunes, when I had been a sharer in their better, I knew not how to get over. Still, I began to have some inclinations to the University, if I knew how to get thither, or to live there when I came ; but then I was not acquainted with one soul of the Church of England, or, at least, with none to whom I might address myself for assistance or advice.

"I was now offered employment among the Dissenters, (having been with them nearly four years,) either in a gentleman's house, or as chaplain to an East Indian ship ; but my inclinations were more for Oxford, where, I thought, I might have opportunities more fully to study the point which I was now almost resolved upon.

"Still there were some rubs lay in my way thither, which our people generally urged to prevent us from such intentions. I was told (1.) that the Universities were so scandalously debauched that there was no breathing for a sober man in them ; (2.) that the Church of England, so far from encouraging Dissenters to close with her communion, generally frowned on those who did so, and never loved nor trusted them ; and (3.) that the nation was so unanimously against the Church of England, that the bishops and hierarchy would certainly have a speedy fall ; and even rats and mice were wise enough to quit a tumbling house, and not to run into it."

In reference to the first of these objections, he says—"I resolved not to believe a word about Oxford debauchery till I saw it, for which now a very happy opportunity offered. Dr Owen having died, the trustees of the £10 exhibition* requested me to enter the university with all speed. To this end I went to Oxford, and stayed there some time. I found many sober and religious men, as well as some Rakehells ; and discoursed several points on which I still hesitated a little, and received satisfaction on them."

He adds, that having been so long with the Dissenters, he still thought, even after he went to Oxford, that Episcopacy would

* The £10 exhibition was one of upwards of twenty more, left by Dr G. for the benefit of young scholars designed to be ministers.

be abolished; and not being willing to be over hasty, he returned to London to give the subject further consideration. Soon after his return, he had £20 given him,—part of a considerable sum of money, left by a Dissenter, to be distributed among ministers. With this he paid his debts, as far as it would go, and then resolved for Oxford as soon as possible,—whither accordingly he went, in the name of God, and entered himself there, the — day in August 1683, a servitor of Exeter College.

When he had been some months at college, and after several letters had passed between them, he was “followed by a young gentleman, one of his fellow-pupils at his first tutor’s, who was now a Fellow of Exeter College, and ordained a priest.”*

This is all that is known of the reasons that induced Samuel Wesley to leave the Church of his fathers, except another little incident mentioned by himself. He writes—“A reverend and worthy person, my relation, who lived at a great distance, coming to London, was so kind as to see me while I was at Mr Morton’s, and gave me such arguments against the Dissenting schism, which I was then embarked with, as added weight to my resolutions, when I began to think of leaving it.”

The above account differs from the accounts which previous biographers have published; but, being taken from Mr Wesley’s own writings, there can be no doubt of its correctness.

When Samuel Wesley set out for Oxford, all that he possessed was forty-five shillings. By leaving the Dissenters, he had forfeited the friendship of all the friends he had. His mother was a poor forlorn widow, utterly unable to afford him help; and yet, this well-nigh penniless young man resolves to obtain for himself a university education and university degrees. He was nearly five years at college; and yet, five shillings was all the assistance which, during that period, he received from his family and friends. To ride to college was a thing not to be thought about. To use his own expression, he “footed it.” His books, his clothes, and his other luggage, were all probably carried in a knapsack on his back. Thus the young student entered Oxford, friendless and well-nigh moneyless, in 1683; and, five years after, he left it, not dishonoured, but with B.A. attached to his subsequently distinguished name,—having managed to support himself, and to pay his fees, by his own endeavours, and to bring away with him a

* S. Wesley’s *Letter from a Country Divine*. Third edit. 1706.

more than four times heavier than the purse he took. He started with forty-five shillings; he left with two hundred and fifteen. How was this accomplished? We shall shortly see.

The following description of Exeter College is taken from "A Pocket Companion for Exeter," published in the middle of the eighteenth century.—The front of Exeter College is 220 feet long, in the centre of which is a magnificent gate, with a tower over it. The building within chiefly consists of a large quadrangle, formed by the hall, the chapel, the rector's lodgings, and the chambers of the students. The gardens are neatly disposed, and, though within the town, have an airy and pleasant opening to the east. The library is well furnished with books in the several arts and sciences, and with a very valuable collection of the classics, given by Edward Richards, Esq. It also contains a large oratory, the gift of Thomas Blackall, Esq. The hall was built by Sir John Ackland, and the chapel by Dr Hakewell. Hakewell was a man of eminence. Having been appointed chaplain to Prince Charles, he deemed it his duty to attempt to convince his royal pupil that he would act wisely in abandoning his contemplated marriage with the Infanta of Spain. This so enraged Charles's father, that he ordered Hakewell to be arrested and imprisoned. Under the reign of Charles, however, he was promoted to the bishopric of Worcester, and was elected Rector of Exeter College. When the civil wars commenced, he submitted to the authority of Parliament, and retained his office as rector of the college till his death, in 1649. His chief work is a folio volume, on the "Power and Providence of God."

The founder of Exeter College was Walter Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, Lord Treasurer of England, and Secretary of State to King Edward II., 1316. He founded a society of thirteen—that is, a rector and twelve fellows—one of whom, the chaplain, was to be appointed by the dean and chapter of Exeter; eight were to be elected out of the archdeaconries of Exeter, Totnes, and Barnstaple; and four out of the archdeaconry of Cornwall. Among the subsequent benefactors of Exeter College was Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter, who settled two fellowships for the diocese of Sarum. Sir William Petre obtained a new charter and new statutes, and founded eight additional fellowships. Charles I. added one for Jersey and Guernsey; and Mrs Shiers added two more for Hertford and Surrey. The number of students was about eighty, and the visitor was the Bishop of Exeter.

Samuel Wesley entered this college as a *servitor*. A "servitor" means a scholar or student, who attends and waits on another scholar or student, and receives, as a compensation, his maintenance. Such was the position of young Wesley. There was no help for it. He was determined to secure the benefits of a university education; and, in the absence of money and of friends, he became a servant to some other scholar in order to find himself bread. There was no disgrace in this; and yet, it is not difficult to imagine that such a "servitor," notwithstanding his cleverness, would be subjected to taunts from beardless youths, who, in all respects excepting one, were vastly his inferiors. Here was a young man, twenty-one years of age, respectably connected, highly educated, but well-nigh as poor as poverty could make him, resolved upon the acquisition of academic fame; and, in the struggle, battling with his innate pride, and patiently, if not cheerfully, submitting to annoyances for the sake of obtaining that upon which his heart was set. Difficulties, which would have discouraged others, aroused him; and he resolved to conquer or to die.

Samuel Wesley was a servitor; and he was also entered as *pauper scholaris*, which was the lowest of the four conditions of members of the Exeter College. He began as low as he could begin; but struggling with discouragements increased his strength instead of lessening it. He rose superior to his obstacles. Besides attending to the humiliating duties of a servitor, he composed exercises for those who had more money than mind, and gave instructions to those who wished to profit by his lessons; and thus, by unwearied toil and great frugality, the poor, fatherless, and friendless scholar, not only managed to support himself, but when he retired from Oxford in 1688, he was seven pounds fifteen shillings richer than he was when he first entered it in 1683. Who can tell his struggles during the five years of privation spent at this great seat of learning? His *servitorial* services might obtain him bread; but what about the payment of his fees, the purchase of his clothes, and the procuring of fire? The first winter of his residence at Oxford, was one of the severest recorded in the annals of English history. Calamy tells us that "the Thames was frozen over, and the ice so firm and strong, that there were hundreds of booths and shops upon it. Coaches plied as freely from the Temple Stairs to Westminster, as if they had gone upon the land. All sorts of diversions were practised on the congealed waters, and

even an ox was roasted whole on the river, over against Whitehall." Such was the bitter commencement of Samuel Wesley's collegiate life; and, at the most, he only had about two pounds, in his almost needless purse, to meet it.

"Necessity is the mother of invention." It was this, probably, that induced Samuel Wesley to publish his first work in 1685. Whilst he was at Mr Veal's and Mr Morton's academies, he wrote a number of boyish rhymes, several of which were recited from the platforms of those academies, and gained applause from the tutors and pupils present. Other poetical pieces of a similar description were written after he went to Oxford; and the whole, during the second year of his residence, were published under the title of "Maggots; or Poems on several subjects never before handled, by a Scholar, London. Printed for John Dunton, at the sign of the Black Raven, near the Royal Exchange, 1685."

This book will neither instruct the reader, nor contribute to the author's literary fame; and yet, because it was the first book published by an eminent literary man; and because it is now so extremely scarce, that hardly one Wesleyan student in a thousand has ever seen it, a brief description of it may be interesting, if not useful.

The book begins with an anonymous portrait of the author, crowned with laurel, and having a Maggot seated on his brow. Beneath the portrait are the following lines:—

"In his own defence the author writes,
Because when this foul maggot bites,
He ne'er can rest in quiet:
Which makes him make so sad a face,
He'd beg your worship, or your grace,
Unseen, unseen, to buy it."

The book consists of 172 pages; and is dedicated "To the honoured Mr H. D——, Head Master of the Free School in D——, in the county of D——." "Mr H. D——" was Mr Henry Dolling, who was Samuel Wesley's schoolmaster at Dorchester. In the dedication, he informs us that this book is his "first formed birth," and, in his epistle to the reader, he says that "all the Maggots are the natural issue of his own brain pan, born and bred there, and only there." In reply to the objection, that the work is "light, vain, frothy, and below the gravity of a man, at least of a Christian," he says, if the objector will lend him a hand-

ful of beard, and be at the charge of grafting it on, he will promise a speedy and thorough reformation. Besides, he argues, that time ought to be allowed for recreation as well as work ; and, moreover, he hopes that he has written nothing to make even himself or his reader blush. He was never vain enough to think that his "Maggots" would procure him much reputation ; neither was he ambitious of seeing his worthy name glittering in a Term Catalogue ; and therefore he thought it not worth his while to throw away better time in making his book more perfect.*

Many of the poems flash with wit, and are most pleasantly expressed. Sometimes there is a want of delicacy ; but that, perhaps, is not so much the fault of the man, as of the age in which he wrote. Southey says, "His imagination seems to have been playful and diffuse ; and had he written during his son's celebrity, some of his pieces might perhaps have been condemned by the godly as profane." Dr A. Clarke demurs to this, and not without reason. There are in the "Maggots" what the present refined age would call indelicate and coarse expressions ; but, in this respect, Samuel Wesley was only imitating Dryden and the standard writers of the period in which he lived.

Several of the poems are levelled against the vices of the day, and are scorchingly severe ; but it would scarcely answer any good purpose to reproduce them.

We merely give one extract, taken from the piece on "the Tobacco Pipe," and which is a fair specimen of the entire book. Perhaps, also, it indicates that he had already fallen into the unfortunate habit of smoking, which will have to be noticed in due time :—

" In these raw mornings, when I'm freezing ripe,
What can compare with a tobacco pipe ?
Primed, cock'd, and touch't, 'twould better heat a man
Than ten Bath faggots, or Scotch warming pan.
For the toothache 'tis a specific aid,
For every amorous boy, or lovesick maid.
Sometimes another way to work 'twill go,
Up spouts a deluge from the abyss below ;—
This physic is more safe, (though not so fine,)
Than bumpers crown'd too oft with sparkling wine.
A glass is not a better cure than that,
For care, or toothache, both of which would kill a cat.

* For the titles of the poems, see Appendix A.

Surely when Prometheus climb'd above the poles,
 Slyly to learn their art of making souls,
 When of his fire he fretting Jove did wipe,
 He stole it thence in a tobacco pipe;
 Which, predisposed to live, as down he ran,
 By the soul's plastic power, from clay was turn'd to man."

In the "Dunciad" * of Alexander Pope, there is a line which seems to refer to Samuel Wesley's "Maggots." The reference is not clear and undeniable; but still it has an air of probability. In his first book, line 53, Pope writes:—

"Here she beholds the chaos dark and deep,
 Where nameless somethings in their causes sleep,
 'Till genial Jacob, or a warm third day
 Call forth each mass, a poem or a play.
 How hints, like spawn, scarce quick in embryo lie!
 How new-born nonsense first is taught to cry!
Maggots half form'd, in rhyme, exactly meet,
 And learn to crawl upon poetic feet!
 Here one poor word a hundred clenches makes,
 And ductile dulness new meanders takes;
 There motley images her fancy strike,
 Figures ill-pair'd, and similes unlike."

This first book of Samuel Wesley's was published by the eccentric John Dunton, who was born three years before Wesley, and therefore was now a young publisher, of not more than twenty-six years of age. His father was a clergyman, and he was intended for the same profession; but, being found too volatile, he was apprenticed to Thomas Parkhurst, the most eminent Presbyterian bookseller in the three kingdoms. Wesley was acquainted with Dunton before he went to Oxford. A year previous to his removal thither, he was present at Dunton's wedding, and presented to the happy couple an epithalamium. The object of Dunton's choice was Elizabeth, one of the daughters of Dr Samuel Annesley, and sister of her who six years afterwards became the wife of Wesley. Dunton commenced business near the Royal Exchange. His affairs prospered for the first three years, until the stagnation cast upon trade by the defeat of Monmouth in the west. In the same year that he published Wesley's "Maggots," he sustained some serious losses, and went to America to repair his fortune. Twelve months afterwards, he came back to his wife and to her father; but, on account of his pecuniary embarrassments, he was, for nearly

* Edition 1729.

a year, a sort of domestic prisoner, and, to avoid arrest, durst not cross the threshold of the house in which he lived. The only time, in the course of ten months, that he ventured to go out of doors, was on a Sunday to hear Dr Annesley, his father-in-law, preach. To prevent detection, he shaved off his beard, and put on a woman's clothes. He got safe to the meeting-house, and sat down in the obscurest corner he could find. He was returning home, through Bishopsgate Street, with all the circumspection and care imaginable, when an unlucky rogue cried out, "I'll be hanged if that be not a man in woman's clothes!" Away Dunton ran as fast as his legs could carry him; a mob of twenty or thirty persons ran after him; but his intimate knowledge of the alleys in that part of the city, enabled him to dodge and get rid of his pursuers, and, in great trepidation he reached his house without arrest.* Dunton became wearied with this confinement, and made a trip to Holland, Flanders, and Germany, and returned to London in 1688. On the same day that the Prince of Orange entered the capital, Dunton re-opened his place of business. Here he printed six hundred books, and says, there were only seven of them which occasioned him repentance. In 1692 he became possessed of a considerable estate, by the decease of a cousin, and was elected a member of the Company of Stationers. At the age of thirty-eight he was bereaved of his first wife, whose decease he bitterly lamented; but, before the year was out, consoled himself by another marriage with Sarah, daughter of Mrs Nicholas of St Albans. This lady added neither to his comfort nor his fortune. He left her soon after they were married, and became financially embarrassed to the end of life. He died in obscurity two years before Samuel Wesley, in 1733, aged seventy-four.

Dunton was a strange mortal; a man half mad, and yet possessed of genius, and a dabbler in all sorts of books. In 1710 he produced his "Athenianism; or, New Projects," in which he actually announced his intention to publish six hundred distinct treatises, all written by himself. He was far too wild and whimsical to be prosperous.

His description of himself is amusingly characteristic. He says, he was of middle stature; his hair black and curled; his eyes quick and full of spirit; his lips red and soft; his face, though not so beautiful as some, yet rendered amiable by a cheerful,

* Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

sprightly air; his body slender and well proportioned; and his spirit pious and devout. He was plentiful in wit; his way of writing excellent; he had great skill in poetry: his temper was sweet; and he was the most passionate and constant lover living. His friendship was courted by all who knew him. He was hard to be displeased; and, when offended, was easy to be reconciled. His soul was tender and compassionate; and his modesty more than usually great.

In completing this modest portraiture of himself, Dunton adds, "To finish this imperfect description, I must sincerely say, I have all those good qualities that are necessary to render me an accomplished gentleman."

Such was John Dunton, the publisher of Samuel Wesley's first literary production. Dunton says, "The rector of Epworth got his bread by the 'Maggots;'" but Dunton, when he wrote that, had imbibed an implacable hatred towards Wesley, and what he says must be received with caution. No doubt the college finances of young Wesley were extremely low, and, perhaps, in publishing his "Maggots," he had some hope of raising them; but it is scarce likely that the poor scholar would gain much by his adventure, inasmuch as, from the size of his book, the publishing price did not probably exceed a shilling.

Samuel Wesley's time at the university was well occupied. First of all, he had to attend to his duties as servitor, for on that, to some extent, his maintenance depended. Then, to obtain money for the payment of his fees, he gave assistance to other students not so far advanced, nor so willing to submit to hard work as he was. Then he had to prepare for his own examinations, on the result of which depended his obtaining a university degree; and this he did so successfully, that on the 19th of June 1688, he was created Bachelor of Arts; the only student of Exeter College that, during that year, obtained such a distinction.*

Such labours were onerous; but, whilst his time must have been greatly occupied with his daily duties, his benevolent heart would not permit him to live wholly to himself. He was not only ambitious to raise himself, but he likewise yearned to benefit others; and, it is a remarkable coincidence, that the objects of his sympathy were exactly of the same class as those who, forty-five years afterwards, were visited and helped by his sons, John

* Anthony Wood.

and Charles, and the other Oxford Methodists. Notwithstanding the weightiness of his college work, and the lightness of his college purse, he found time to visit the poor wretched inmates of Oxford Gaol, and gladly relieved them as far as he was able. Writing to his two sons, in 1730, when they had begun, of their own accord, to visit the same prison house, he says :—"Go on, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you! For when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited those in the castle there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you."*

When Samuel Wesley had spent about eighteen months at the university King Charles II. died, and James II. succeeded him. A few months afterwards, Oxford was honoured with a visit from this papistical monarch, and an event happened which exercised an important influence on Wesley's subsequent career. One of the historians of Methodism has said, it is a remarkable fact that, though Samuel Wesley had "the piety and persecutions of his father and grandfather in his memory, and though the condition and tendencies of the court were open to his inspection, he was very much attached to the interests of King James."

This statement rests entirely on the testimony of Dr A. Clarke, who says, "His son John has been heard to state that at first his father was very much attached to the interests of James." It is deferentially submitted whether this is strictly true. It is scarce likely that a young man of intelligence, scholarship, and honour, like Samuel Wesley; a young man whose father and grandfather had been ejected from their churches, and hunted to their graves by the myrmidons of Stuart perfidy; and a young man, whose entire life had been spent in the society and schools of those who hated, and had just cause to hate, the Stuart dynasty; we say it is scarce likely that such a young man would feel either much attachment, or any attachment at all, to a despotic and royal traitor like the one just mentioned. But, be that as it may, the occurrence which happened at Oxford, and which is about to be related, exercised an important influence on Samuel Wesley's subsequent behaviour.

Almost immediately after James's accession, in 1685, he ob-

* Wesley's Works, vol. i., p. 7.

but right nobly they resisted this stretch of tyranny, withdrew their former submission, and declared in writing that they could not acknowledge they had done aught amiss. This led to further outrages; and, on the 16th of November, judgment was pronounced against them in the shape of a general deprivation and expulsion. But even this was not sufficient to appease James's vengeance; and hence, a month afterwards, another sentence was issued, incapacitating all and every of the Fellows of Magdalen from holding any benefice or preferment in the Church. James also declared that he would look upon any favour shown to the Fellows as a combination against himself. They were accordingly expelled; their places in the university were filled by avowed Papists, or by very doubtful Protestants; and they themselves were left to find employment and a maintenance in the best way they could. James intended to hinder even their friends offering them assistance; but, notwithstanding his contemptible threats, considerable collections were made for them; and his own daughter, the Princess of Orange, sent over £200 for their relief; so that, in the end, though they obtained the honours of martyrdom, they experienced little of its sufferings. Twelve months after their expulsion their intolerant oppressor made a miserable flight to France, and the Prince of Orange stepped into his place.*

It was in the midst of such disreputable proceedings that Samuel Wesley finished his collegiate training, and left the excited seat of learning where he had spent the last five years. As already stated, he was present when James lectured the Fellows of Magdalen College in such unkingly fashion; and Dr Clarke relates, on the authority of the Rev. Thomas Stedman, that the spirit of young Wesley rose in rebellion against this exhibition of royal arrogance, and that he afterwards remarked: "When I heard him say to the Master and Fellows of Magdalen College, lifting up his lean arm, 'If you refuse to obey me, you shall feel the weight of a king's right hand,' I saw he was a tyrant. And though I was not inclined to take an active part against him, I was resolved from that time to give him no kind of support."

This may be true, and yet there is considerable difficulty in reconciling it with another fact which must be mentioned.

It was during the summer of 1687 that King James played the

* Knight's *History of England*.

tyrant in Magdalen College, and it was on the 10th of June 1688 that the Prince of Wales was born. The words of young Wesley, as cited by Dr Clarke, are evidence that he had formed the purpose to take no part with those who were intent upon the dethronement of James. He was a man far too loyal to become a rebel; and yet it cannot be denied that he regarded the interests of James with indifference. "I was resolved," says he, "from that time to give him no support." While James was king he would obey him; but while bowing to the royal will, he would do nothing to maintain and to establish the royal cause. Such was Wesley's position in the summer of 1687—one of neutrality, or, at the most, of mere obedience.

But twelve months afterwards, at the birth of the Prince of Wales, a change seems to have come over him. The nation took but little interest in this event; in fact, it was alleged that the birth of a royal prince was a royal imposition; and though the court commanded London to make bonfires, and to exhibit other signs of rejoicing, London was sullen, and would provide no rejoicings, except for the seven bishops which were then imprisoned in the Tower, but for whose rescue from the royal tyranny of James the country was most earnestly hoping. Among other means which were used to extort congratulations respecting the royal birth, was a more than mere gentle hint to the University of Oxford that it would be expected to furnish a volume of congratulatory poems, and that even Magdalen College itself would join in this.* Strange to say, the hint was adopted, and a book was written containing more than a hundred poetic pieces professing joy at the birth of a Prince of Wales.

That volume is now before us. Its title-page bears the following inscription:—"Strenæ Natalitiæ Academiæ Oxoniensis, in Clarissimum Principem: Oxonii E Theatro Sheldoniano. An. Dom. 1668." It consists of 86 folio pages, each of which is headed, "In Natalem Sereniss. Principis Walliæ." About ninety of the poems are in Latin, two are in Greek, four in Arabic, one in Hebrew, and twelve in English. The celebrated Hebrew professor, Dr Edward Pococke, wrote his in Arabic. Samuel Wesley and eleven others wrote theirs in English. Most of the colleges, Magdalen included, are represented. The writers belonging to Exeter College are, Sir Henry Northcote, Bart., John Read, Henry

* See Ellis's *Correspondence*, vol. ii., p. 4.

Maundrell, and Samuel Wesley. Wesley's poem is the last but two in the book, and fills two pages. The poem is too long for insertion here, but the reader will find it complete, with the exception of about half a dozen small errors, in Dr Clarke's "Wesley Family." Suffice it to say, that Wesley represents Ariosto as bringing his lyre from heaven to join in the rejoicings. Ariosto also draws "a vocal picture" of the royal group. The "dazzling lustre" of all the graces shines around the eyes of the happy Queen; "Great James's" joy is "too bright to be expressed," and therefore the poet puts "a modest veil around his radiant head;" while the infant prince has his mother's eyes, through which, however, shines his father's soul. The child is "a child of miracles," and a "son of prayers;" he is to defend "his father's mighty throne," and to give "Europe peace;" he is to have "valiant brothers," who will "share in his triumphs;" and when he visits Oxford, the "venerable men, who met Great James his father, will also crowd around him." As the result of his reign, there will be no "cloudy foreheads," and "no contracted brows;"—in fact, a "new world" will "begin," and a "golden age" commence.

This is the substance of Samuel Wesley's poem. The young prince is most lavishly extolled; but the only praise bestowed on the father is that he was "*great*," and perhaps "*brave*" and loving. At first sight, the poem seems to clash with the statement that Samuel Wesley had resolved, twelve months before, to yield to James nothing more than mere obedience; but, in reality, there is no such collision. Wesley had no sympathy with James's tyrannical proceedings; but, at the same time, he could not deny, what most historians acknowledge, that James was a knave rather than a fool. If James's reign was still continued, he would take no part against him; and if James was succeeded by his infant son, he augurs and hopes that he will be able to give brightness to foreheads at present "cloudy," and to smooth the brows which are now contracted; in short, that he will be able to defend the throne of his father, and to give peace to Europe.

We have felt it necessary to go at greater length than we wished into this part of Samuel Wesley's history, because of the importance which has been attached to it by a most able article on "The Ancestry of the Wesleys," in the *London Quarterly Review* for April 1864. Our conviction is, that Samuel Wesley

was an intensely loyal man; and that, notwithstanding all the outrageous tyranny of King James, he would never have taken part against him; but when James ignominiously fled, and William and Mary, by the voice of the nation, were proclaimed his successors, Wesley felt that he owed to them the loyalty and obedience that he had paid to James; and, to use his own words, as a proof of his loyalty, he wrote, in answer to an out-of-door speech, the first defence of the government that appeared after William and Mary's accession; and afterwards published many other pieces, both in prose and verse, having the same end in view.*

* I have examined a large number of pamphlets published at this period, hoping to find the "first defence" of Samuel Wesley. A list of some of these will be found in Appendix B. I incline to think that Mr Wesley's is in that list, but I am not sure.—L. T.

CHAPTER V.

NATIONAL AFFAIRS—1685-1688.

A QUARTER of a century was the time that Charles II. occupied the throne of Great Britain. His reign was a continued scene of royal perfidy and sensual dissipation. He was a deceiver, a despot, and a defiler. He was the slave of women, and his court was the school of vice. For five-and-twenty years he played the hypocrite, by professing himself an orthodox Protestant, when, all the while, he was, in fact, an infidel. In all the relations of life, public and private, he was unprincipled, profligate, false, vicious, and corrupt; whilst, from the example of his debauched and licentious court, public morals contracted a taint which it required little less than a century to obliterate, and which for a time wholly paralysed the character of the nation.* He had good talents, and in society was kind, familiar, communicative; but he was indolent, negligent of the interests of the nation, careless of its glory, averse to its religion, jealous of its liberty, lavish of its treasure, and sparing only of its blood. It has been remarked of him, and with some amount of reason, that he never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one. He had enormous vices, without the tincture of any virtue to correct them. He died in 1685, begging forgiveness of his neglected queen, blessing his bastard children, asking for kindness to be shown to his mistresses, and receiving from a popish priest the Romish communion, extreme unction, and a popish pardon.†

The Duke of York succeeded his brother Charles II. to the

* *Ency. Brit.*, "Great Britain."

† John Wealey says of him:—"He was in every respect a consummate hypocrite, equally void of piety, mercy, honesty, and gratitude. Under a cover of gentleness he was cruel and revengeful to a high degree. He was abandoned to all vices. A worse man never sat on the English throne."—WEALEY'S *History of England*, vol. iii., p. 316.

throne, under the title of James II., in the spring of 1685. On the very first Sunday after his accession he went to mass with all the ensigns of royalty. While he was a subject, James was in the habit of hearing mass, with closed doors, in a small oratory which had been fitted up for his popish wife ; but now that he was king, he ordered the doors to be thrown wide open, so that all who came to pay him homage might see the superstitious ceremonial. Soon, also, a new pulpit was erected in the palace, and, during Lent, sermons were preached there by popish divines, to the great disgust of zealous Protestants.

One of the first acts of James was to throw open the prisons of England, and to set at liberty thousands of Dissenters and Papists, who had been enduring a horrible captivity for conscience' sake.

Two months after James's coronation, the Earl of Argyle and the Duke of Monmouth, by previous concert, invaded Scotland and England with a small force from Holland ; the former to re-establish the Covenant, and the latter to secure the Protestant religion, and to deliver the country from the tyranny of its enthroned monarch. Argyle sent the fiery cross from hill to hill in Scotland, and from clan to clan, until he got 2500 Highlanders to join him. In a few days he was betrayed by his guides, and was made a prisoner. His hands were tied behind him, and, with his head bare, and the headsman marching before him, he was carried to his old cell in Edinburgh Castle, and, on June 30, was beheaded. Monmouth, in England, met with a much more general welcome than Argyle found in Scotland. All classes of the people welcomed him as a deliverer sent from heaven. The poor rent the air with their joyful acclamations, and the rich opened their houses and supplied his army with meat and drink. His path was strewn with flowers ; and windows, as he passed through towns, were crowded with ladies waving their handkerchiefs. On the 20th of June, at Taunton, he took the title of king ; but, after marching through several parts of the West of England, his army was scattered, and he was ignominiously captured in a ditch, disguised as a peasant, with a few peas in his pocket, and himself half buried among ferns and nettles. With almost abject meanness, he implored pardon at the hands of James his uncle, but without effect, for, fifteen days after Argyle was beheaded in Edinburgh, Monmouth was decapitated on Tower Hill.

Immediately after Monmouth's death, Judge Jeffreys was sent to hold his "bloody assizes" in the west. His first victim was Mrs Lisle, widow of one of the Commonwealth judges. The charge against her was that of giving shelter to two of Monmouth's fugitives. For this, Jeffreys sentenced her to be burnt alive, and further ordered that the sentence should be executed on the very day that his foul mouth uttered it. The clergy of Winchester promptly interfered; three days' respite were wrung from the hard-hearted judge; and the venerable matron was beheaded instead of being burnt. From Winchester this brutal being went to Dorchester, on the same murderous business. Here the court, by order of Jeffreys, was hung with scarlet; more than three hundred persons were waiting to be tried; two hundred and ninety-two received sentence of death, but only about eighty were hanged, the rest being imprisoned, severely whipped, or transported. Those that were transported were sold as slaves; and the bodies of those that were hanged were cut into quarters, and stuck up on gibbets. For this bloody work, and while he was yet at Dorchester, Jeffreys was rewarded and encouraged by his applauding and grateful sovereign, who raised him from the seat of Lord Chief-Justice to that of Lord Chancellor. Jeffreys, blushing with his new honours, now went from Dorchester to Exeter, where another red list of two hundred and forty-three prisoners was laid before him, most of whom in a few days were hanged, drawn, and quartered. At Taunton, nearly eleven hundred prisoners were arraigned for high treason. Ten hundred and forty confessed themselves guilty; only six ventured to put themselves on trial; and two hundred and thirty-nine, at the very least, were executed with astounding rapidity. To spread the terror more widely, these executions took place in not fewer than thirty-six different towns and villages. The dripping heads and gory limbs of the deceased were fixed in the most conspicuous places,—in the streets, by the highways, over town halls, and over the very churches. At every spot where two roads met, in every market-place, and on the green of every village that had furnished Monmouth with men, ironed corpses clattered in the wind, or heads and quarters of human beings, stuck on poles, poisoned the air, and made the passing traveller sick with horror. The country, for a stretch of sixty miles, from Bristol to Exeter, was studded with a new and terrible sort of sign-posts, adorned with

the mangled bodies of its slaughtered inhabitants. The wretched Jeffreys boasted, when he returned to London, that in his "bloody campaign" he had hanged more men than all the judges of England had hanged since the time of William the Conqueror.

All these murderous proceedings of Judge Jeffreys had the approbation of King James, and he continued to be one of the king's principal advisers in all the oppressions and arbitrary measures of his despotic reign. Four years after his legalised massacres in the West of England, Jeffreys wished to steal away to a foreign country, there to hide himself and his ill-gotten wealth from the detestation of mankind; but before he could fulfil his purpose, he was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. The rabble gathered before his deserted mansion, and read on the door, with shouts of laughter, the bills which announced the sale of his property. Even delicate women, who had tears for highwaymen and housebreakers, breathed nothing but vengeance against him. The street poets portioned out all his joints with cannibal ferocity, and computed how many pounds of steaks might be cut from his well-fattened carcase. He was exhorted to hang himself with his garters, and to cut his throat with his razor. His spirit, as mean in adversity as it had been insolent and inhuman in prosperity, sunk under the load of public abhorrence. His constitution, originally bad and much impaired by drunkenness, was completely broken by distress and by anxiety. He was tortured by a cruel internal disease, which baffled the doctors' skill. One—only one solace was left to him—brandy. Disease, assisted by strong drink and by misery, did its work with great rapidity. The poor wretch dwindled, in a few weeks, from a portly and even corpulent man to a skeleton; and on the 10th of April 1689, he died at the early age of forty-one.*

But to return. It is a striking coincidence, that about the time when Judge Jeffreys was holding his "bloody assizes" in the West of England, King Louis of France was revoking the tolerant edict of Nantes, and driving thousands of his Huguenot subjects to England and other lands of exile. Other curious and important events happened in James's short reign, which our space permits to be only mentioned. For instance, Dryden, the greatest writer of the day, turned Catholic, perhaps to please the royal Papist sitting on the throne; but Jeffreys refused to do so, on the ground that, when

* Macaulay.

he was in Africa, he promised the Emperor of Morocco that, if he ever changed his religion, he would become a Turk. Another pro-papistical act was this,—King James, asserting a repealing power over all laws and Acts of Parliament, took upon himself not only to dismiss Protestants from the highest civil and military offices, but to put Papists into their places. He likewise gave the revenues of the Church in Ireland, to a great extent, to popish bishops and priests, and not merely permitted, but commanded them to wear their canonicals in public. He cashiered four thousand Protestant soldiers, stripped them of their uniforms, and left them to wander hungry and half-naked through the land; their officers, for the most part, retiring into Holland, and rallying round the Prince of Orange there.

All this excited anxiety, and, at length, the pulpits, even of High Churchmen, and despite the dogma of passive obedience, began to resound with warnings and denunciations. James now suspended Compton, Bishop of London; attempted to convert his daughter, the Princess Anne, to the popish religion; and tried to deprive his daughter Mary, the Princess of Orange, of her right to the succession. He endeavoured to obtain the control of the public seminaries, schools, and colleges; and to appoint Papists to be their officers. Four popish bishops were publicly consecrated in the Chapel Royal,—were sent to their dioceses with the titles of vicars apostolical; their pastoral letters being also licensed, printed, and dispersed throughout the kingdom. James likewise issued letters mandatory to the bishops of England, prohibiting the clergy to preach upon points of controversy, and establishing an ecclesiastical commission with more power than had been possessed by the abominable court over which Laud presided.

At the beginning of 1687, a declaration of indulgence was issued by proclamation at Edinburgh, “We, by our *sovereign authority, prerogative royal, and absolute power*, do hereby give and grant our royal toleration. We allow and tolerate the moderate Presbyterians to meet in their private houses, and to hear such ministers as have been, or are willing to accept of our indulgence, but they are not to build meeting-houses, but to exercise in houses. We tolerate Quakers to meet in their form in any place, or places, appointed for their worship: and we, by our sovereign authority, suspend, stop, and disable, all laws or Acts of Parliament made or executed against any of our Roman Catholic sub-

jects, so that they shall be free to exercise their religion and to enjoy all ; but they are to exercise in houses or chapels : and we ~~case~~, annul, and discharge all oaths by which our subjects are disabled from holding offices."*

On the 4th of April, 1687, "a declaration for liberty of conscience," came out in the *Gazette*, by which all the penal laws against Protestant Nonconformists, as well as Catholics, were to be suspended. The declaration gave leave to all men to meet and serve God after their own manner, publicly as well as privately ; it denounced the royal displeasure, and the vengeance of the laws against all who should disturb any religious worship ; and it granted a free pardon to all the king's loving subjects from penalties, forfeitures, and disabilities incurred on account of religion and the penal laws.

About the same time, King James went to Oxford, and, in the exercise of his popish inclinations and despotic principles, made the disgraceful exhibition of himself, in Magdalen College, which was witnessed by Samuel Wesley, and which is related in Chapter IV.

Twelve months after, on April 27, 1688, he published another declaration of indulgence, in substance the same as the two above mentioned ; but which went a step farther, for not only was the declaration published, but all the clergy were commanded to read it in their churches. This was the spark that set fire to the train, which had been accumulating for many months.

National patience was exhausted. These indulgences were right enough in principle ; but there were two great objections to their being published. First, it was a most unconstitutional and outrageous stretch of royal authority to pretend, "by virtue of our *sovereign authority, prerogative royal, and absolute power,*" to "*suspend, stop, and disable* laws and Acts of Parliament," without parliamentary consent. And, secondly, it was well known that, in publishing these unconstitutional declarations, James was not actuated with the least wish to do justice to Protestant Nonconformists ; but chiefly, if not exclusively, desired the toleration of his own sect, the Papists ; and hoped that this might be a preparatory step to the triumphant establishment of the Popish Church. James's conduct in Scotland, where he had hacked to pieces so many Protestants, could not be forgotten, but spoke far

* Knight's *Pictorial History*

more loudly than the hollow-hearted language of his indulgent declarations; besides, the loud denunciations of James's Lord Chancellor, the bloodthirsty Jeffreys, against all Protestant Dissenters as king-haters, rebels, and republicans, were still ringing in the nation's ears. The people remembered that, within the last three years, the great and good Richard Baxter, had been committed to the King's Bench Prison on the charge of printing his paraphrase of the New Testament; and had been brought to trial, before Jeffreys, at Westminster, at the very time that Titus Oates was standing in the pillory in the New Palace Yard; Jeffreys gleefully exclaiming at the moment, "If Baxter stood on the other side of Oates's pillory, I would say two of the greatest rogues and rascals in the kingdom stood there." The people remembered that the insulted Baxter, for his alleged offence, had been fined five hundred marks, and had been ordered to lie in prison until the fine was paid; besides being bound to good behaviour for seven years. They were not able to forget, that, in the very year before the first declaration was issued, the Protestant Dissenters had again and again had their private religious meetings, which they had dared to hold, disturbed and broken up, both in town and country, by the myrmidons of King James's government; and that Sir John Hartop, and some others, at Stoke Newington, had had distresses levied for the payment of a fine of about £700.* For James to pretend friendship to Protestant Dissenters, in the face of such facts, was a piece of hypocrisy, which none but a royal simpleton, afflicted with a little mind, and blinded by prejudice, would have attempted to impose upon the credulity of intelligent and religious men.

Never, not even under the tyranny of Laud, had the condition of the Dissenters been so deplorable as it was under James. Never had spies been so actively employed in detecting congregations; and never had magistrates, grand-jurors, rectors, and church-wardens been so much on the alert. It was impossible for the sectaries to pray together without precautions such as are employed by coiners and receivers of stolen goods. Places of worship had to be frequently changed. Worship had to be performed, sometimes just before the break of day, and sometimes at dead of night. Round the building where the little flock was gathered together, sentinels were placed to give the alarm if a stranger drew

* *Baxter's Life and Times.*

near. The minister, in disguise, was introduced through the garden and the back yard. In some houses, there were trap doors, through which, in case of danger, he might descend. No psalm was sung; and many contrivances were used to prevent the voice of the preacher, in his moments of fervour, from being heard outside. And yet, with all this care, several opulent gentlemen in the suburbs of London were accused of holding conventicles, and distresses were levied to the amount of many thousand pounds. Dissenting ministers, however blameless in life, however eminent for learning and abilities, could not venture to walk the streets for fear of outrages, encouraged by those whose duty it was to preserve the peace. Some divines of great fame were in prison; others, crushed with oppression, had quitted the kingdom; and great numbers, who had been accustomed to frequent conventicles, repaired to the parish church.*

What was the result? James commanded that the declaration, published on the 27th of April 1688, should be read by all the clergy in their churches, in and about London, on the 20th and 27th of May; and in all the rest of England and Wales on the 3d and 10th of June following. The bishops † were commanded to be vigilant in enforcing the royal order, and those who refused to read were to be prosecuted by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The 20th of May arrived; but only seven, out of a hundred clergymen in London read the declaration, and even they read with fear and trembling, being groaned at by their congregations. On the 27th of May the signs of obedience were not more numerous; and a newly-appointed reader at the Chapel Royal was so much agitated that he was not able to read the declaration so as to be heard. On the 3d and 10th of June, the mass of the clergy in the provinces and in Wales, were quite as disobedient as those in the capital. It is said that, at the time, there were more than ten thousand clergy in the kingdom, and yet not more than two hundred complied with the royal will.

And here we must pause, for the purpose of spoiling a very interesting story respecting Samuel Wesley. The Rev. Henry Moore relates that Samuel Wesley was strongly solicited by the friends of King James II. to support the measures of the court in favour of Popery, with a promise of preferment, if he would comply with the king's desire. But when the time came for read-

* Macaulay.

† *Ibid.*

ing the king's declaration, he most firmly refused; and though surrounded by courtiers, soldiers, and informers, he preached a bold and pointed discourse against it from Daniel iii. 17, 18: "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Unfortunately this heroic story is untrue. As we shall see shortly, Samuel Wesley was not ordained a deacon until two months after the declaration was commanded to be read, and therefore, at the time, was not authorised to preach, either from such a text, or from any text at all; nor was he in a position either to read or to refuse to read the king's declaration.

The story has been repeated by Southey, by Macaulay, by Dr Smith, by Dr Stevens, and by many other of the leading historians of the age; but, as just shown, it is utterly without foundation. Henry Moore's mistake was a simple and easy one. He attributes to Samuel Wesley a fact which belongs to the Rev. John Berry, A.M., vicar of Watton, in Norfolk, the father-in-law of Samuel Wesley, jun. The latter, in a "poem upon a clergyman lately deceased," published in 1731, delineates the character of Mr Berry; and the poem, in substance, contains the story, which has so long and so often been improperly applied to Samuel Wesley, sen.:—

"When zealous James, unhappy sought the way,
'T' establish Rome by arbitrary sway,
'Twas then the Christian priest was nobly tried,
When hireling slaves embraced the stronger side,
And saintly sects and sycophants complied.
In vain were bribes shower'd by the guilty crown,
He sought no favour as he fear'd no frown.
Nor loudest storms his steady purpose broke,
Firm as the beaten anvil to the stroke.
Secure in faith, exempt from worldly views,
He dared the declaration to refuse;
Then from the sacred pulpit boldly show'd,
The dauntless Hebrews true to Israel's God,
Who spake regardless of their king's commands:
'The God we serve can save us from thy hands;
If not, O monarch, know we choose to die,
Thy gods alike and threat'nings we defy.
No power on earth our faith has e'er controll'd,
We scorn to worship idols, though of gold.'

Resistless truth damp'd all the audience round,
 The base informer sicken'd at the sound;
 Attentive courtiers conscious stood amazed,
 And soldiers silent trembled as they gazed.
 No smallest murmur of distaste arose,
 Abash'd and vanquish'd seem'd the Church's foes.
 So when like zeal their bosoms did inspire,
 The Jewish martyrs walk'd unhurt in fire!"*

We are not sure that even this was intended to be considered as the description of a fact actually occurring in the history of the poet's father-in-law. It might be nothing more than a poetical and general description of the position taken by the ten thousand clergy, who refused to read King James's declaration. Anyhow, for the reason already mentioned, it could not be true of Samuel Wesley, sen. No doubt Samuel Wesley was as brave a man as ever lived; and had he been placed in the circumstances, stated by Henry Moore, he would have had sufficient courage to act as it is alleged he did. He regarded King James as a tyrant; and his views of the king's declaration may be fairly gathered from the following question and answer in the *Athenian Oracle*:—*

"*Ques.* What think you of the liberty of conscience granted in the late reign? Was it procured by the Catholics out of any design, or purely for the good and peace of the subjects?"

"*Ans.* It is contrary to reason to believe that any true and zealous Papist can be for liberty of conscience, it being a fundamental of their religion, that all who differ from them in matters of faith are heretics, and ought to be destroyed. And, as it is natural for every persuasion to plead for liberty when they are denied it, and cannot have the freedom to serve God in their own method, so likewise, experience teaches us, that if the wheel turns, these very men which abhorred persecution, are no sooner in power but immediately endeavour by force to bring others to a compliance with what they profess. And if we find this error amongst the mildest and most charitable persuasions, we dare confidently affirm it would not have been otherwise with Roman Catholics, since they look upon the converting of heretics to be no small meritorious work."

But leaving the ten thousand clergymen who refused to read

* *Poems* by S. Wesley, jun., London, 1736.

† Vol. ii., p. 60.

King James's declaration, and also abstaining from any further notice of the apochryphal story concerning Samuel Wesley's bravery, we must now return to the declaration itself.

James commanded this royal manifesto to be read in churches, and charged the bishops to take care that his mandate was obeyed. Two days before the time when the declaration was to be first read, six of the bishops met the primate, Sancroft, at his palace at Lambeth; and there, with the assent of the ex-minister Lord Clarendon, and of Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Tennison, Grove, and Sherlock, esteemed the best preachers and writers in the Church, it was privately resolved that a petition, prepared by Sancroft, should be forthwith presented to his Majesty. The petition, which was delivered on the evening of the same day, humbly showed that the objection of the clergy to read the declaration did not arise from their want of obedience to the king, nor yet from any want of tenderness to Dissenters; but because the declaration was founded upon a dispensing power in the king, which had often been declared illegal in parliament. James read the petition, and coolly folded it up, and then, with disdain and anger, said, "This is a great surprise to me. This is a standard of rebellion." The bishops protested against such an interpretation. James kept muttering, "Is this what I have deserved from the Church of England? I will remember you who have signed this paper. I will be obeyed." On the morrow, as he was on his way to mass, he met the Bishop of St David's. "My lord," cried he, "your brethren have presented the most seditious paper that was ever penned. It is a trumpet of rebellion."

Three weeks after, the seven bishops were summoned before the Privy Council, to answer a charge of high misdemeanour, and were committed to the Tower. They were conveyed from Whitehall by water, and were followed by the tears and prayers of thousands. Both banks of the Thames were lined with multitudes, who fell on their knees, beseeching God to protect the sufferers for religion and liberty. The very soldiers in the Tower acted as mourners; and even the Nonconformists, who had felt all the bitterness of Episcopal persecution, sent a deputation of ten of their ministers to wait upon, and condole with the prisoners. Twenty-eight peers were ready to bail them; and messages were brought over from Holland, assuring them of the sympathy of the Prince and Princess of Orange.

A week later, on the 15th of June, they were brought before the King's Bench, by a writ of habeas corpus. An immense concourse of people received them on the bank of the river, and followed them to Westminster Hall, the greater part falling upon their knees, wishing them happiness, and asking their blessing. Within the court, the bishops found the peers who offered to be their sureties, and a crowd of gentlemen attached to their interests. They were charged with a seditious libel. They pleaded "Not Guilty." The trial was then postponed for a fortnight.

At the expiration of that time, the bishops again entered Westminster Hall, surrounded by lords and gentlemen, and followed by prayers and blessings. The trial began at nine o'clock in the morning. At seven in the evening, the jury retired to consider their verdict, and were locked up all night. At nine next morning, they returned the verdict "Not Guilty." The noblemen, gentlemen, and people within the court raised a loud huzza. This was echoed back by a louder huzza from those without. As the bishops passed to the river side, there was a lane of people, all on their knees, to beg their benediction. Sixty earls and lords were present, joining in the jubilations of the people. At night London was lighted from end to end with blazing bonfires, all the church bells were ringing, and the Pope was burned in effigy before the windows of the royal palace. The excitement was amazing. James's popish and despotic reign was doomed. The royally-applauded atrocities of Judge Jeffreys, which made the land a shambles, and turned the law itself into the bloodiest of tyrannies, awoke only groans and muttered curses; but the imprisonment of seven bishops at once brought about a revolution.

Meanwhile, in the same month that the trial of the bishops took place, the queen was delivered of a fine healthy boy. The Lord Mayor of London was commanded to provide bonfires and other public rejoicings; but there were no bonfires now except for persecuted bishops, and the alleged birth of a prince, instead of being honoured, was pronounced to be a gross imposture.

The Protestants, Tories as well as Whigs, turned to the Prince of Orange as their only hope, and an invitation was sent to him to come from Holland, with an armed force, to call in question the legitimacy of the pretended new born prince, and to redress the grievances of the nation. Before the month expired, Prince

William had collected 15,000 land troops, a fleet of seventy ships, and a large train of artillery.

James began to apprehend danger, and attempted to disarm the animosity of the people by concessions. He even condescended to consult with the seven bishops whom he had so recently harassed. He replaced the Protestant deputy-lieutenants and magistrates. He gave back to the city of London its old charter, and restored Compton to his Episcopal office.

On the 3d of October, the primate and eight bishops waited upon the king, and endeavoured to bring him back "to the religion in which he had been baptized and educated;" but, just at that time, the infant, whose birth had helped to increase the storm, was baptized, with great pomp, according to the rites of the Church of Rome. The Pope, represented by his nuncio, was godfather to the child, and the baptism of James Francis Edward, with full particulars of the ceremony, was published in the *Gazette*. This added fresh elements to the storm which was already raging, and the bastardy of the unlucky child was sung in scurrilous songs in the streets of London.

On October 16th, William of Orange set sail, his ship bearing the British flag, which was emblazoned with the motto, "I will maintain the Protestant religion, and the liberties of England." James soon found that his game was ended, and that there was nothing left for him but an ignominious flight. William came safe to anchor at Torbay, and landed on the 5th of November, the anniversary of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. Exactly five weeks after, the queen, disguised as an Italian lady, fled with the infant prince across the Thames to Lambeth, being lighted on her dolorous way by the flames of burning popish chapels. From Lambeth, she and her child were conveyed in a coach to Gravesend, where they entered a yacht, which landed them at Calais. In less than twenty-four hours the stupified king fled after them, throwing the great seal of England into the river as he crossed to the Surrey side. At Feversham he embarked in a custom-house hoy. The boat encountered a storm, and was obliged to put in at the Isle of Sheppy. There the people seized the disguised monarch, under the idea that he was a fugitive Jesuit, treated him with rudeness, and dragged him back a prisoner to Faversham. At Faversham he was subjected to further indignities, the mob calling him a "hatchet-faced Jesuit."

At length he was rescued by Lord Winchelsea out of the rude hands of sailors, smugglers, and fishermen, and actually came back to London, and invited his son-in-law, the Prince of Orange, to meet him, for the purpose of amicably settling the distractions of the nation. The invitation was declined; and, on December 23d, James again set sail for France, where he landed two days after; and thus was England happily delivered from the popish, perfidious, dissolute, and despotic dynasty of the Stuarts.* Seven weeks afterwards both Houses of Parliament agreed to the resolution, "That William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, be, and be declared, King and Queen of England, France, and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging."

It was in the midst of this national revolution that Samuel Wesley left the University of Oxford, and became an ordained clergyman of the Church of England.

Perhaps this digression may be thought too long, and yet, at the risk of wearying the reader's patience still further, a few more sketches of the state of the country, at this momentous period of its history, are added. They are chiefly taken from Macaulay, and it is hoped that they may help to convey some idea of the condition of affairs when Samuel Wesley commenced his ministry. Things at that time were widely different from what they are at present, and that must be borne in mind if the reader wishes rightly to understand the difficulties and discouragements of a Christian minister like the subject of this biography.

London, where Wesley first entered upon the duties of his sacred office, was, comparatively speaking, a small, dirty, ill-built town. In the east, no part of the immense line of warehouses and artificial lakes, which now spreads from the Tower to Blackwall, had even been projected. On the west, scarcely one of those stately piles of building, which are inhabited by the noble and the wealthy, was in existence; and Chelsea, now peopled by tens of thousands of human beings, was then a quiet country village. On the north cattle fed, and sportsmen wandered with dogs and

* The following is John Wesley's character of King James: "He appears to have been proud, haughty, vindictive, cruel, and unrelenting; and though he approved himself an obedient subject, he certainly became one of the most intolerable sovereigns that ever reigned over a free people. He could have no true religion, at least while in England, as he made no conscience at all of adultery. He is said afterwards to have been a new man. Probably the loss of his crown was the saving of his soul."—WESLEY'S *History of England*, vol. iii., p. 348.

guns over the site of the borough of Marylebone, and over far the greater space now covered by the boroughs of Finsbury and the Tower Hamlets. Islington was almost a solitude; and poets loved to contrast its silence and repose with the din and turmoil of the monster London. On the south, the capital was connected with its suburbs by a single line of irregular arches, impeding the navigation of the river, and overhung by piles of mean and crazy houses. In Covent Garden a filthy and noisy market was held close to the dwellings of the great. Fruit women screamed, carters fought, and cabbage stalks and rotten apples accumulated in heaps at the thresholds of the Countess of Berkshire and of the Bishop of Durham. The centre of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields was an open space, where the rabble congregated every evening to hear mountebanks harangue, to see bears dance, and to set dogs at oxen. St James's Square was a receptacle for all the offal and cinders, and for all the dead cats and dead dogs of Westminster. The pavement of London was detestable, and the drainage so bad that, in rainy weather, the gutters soon became torrents. The houses were not numbered. The shops were distinguished by painted signs, gay and grotesque. The walk from Charing Cross to Whitechapel lay through an endless succession of Saracens' Heads, Royal Oaks, Blue Bears, and Golden Lambs. When the evening closed in, garret windows were opened, and pails were emptied, with little regard to those who walked on the path below. Most of the streets were left in profound darkness, where thieves plied their trade with impunity, and dissolute young gents broke windows, upset sedans, beat quiet men, and offered rude caresses to pretty women.

Nothing like the London daily newspaper of our time existed, or could exist. Both the necessary capital and the necessary skill were wanting. No newspaper was published oftener than twice a week; and none exceeded in size a single small leaf. The quantity of matter which one of them contained in a year was not more than is often found in two numbers of the *Times*. There were no provincial newspapers whatever. Indeed, except in the capital and at the two universities, there was scarcely a printer in the kingdom; and the only printing press in England, north of the river Trent, appears to have been at York.

In the country, many thousands of square miles, now enclosed and cultivated, were marsh, forest, and heath. The peasant kept

a flock of geese on what is now an orchard rich with apple blossoms. He snared wild fowl on the fen which has long since been drained, and divided into corn and turnip fields. He cut turf among the furze bushes on the moor, which is now a meadow, bright with clover, and renowned for its butter and its cheese. The market-place, which the rustic can now reach with his cart in an hour, was then a day's journey from his home. On the best lines of communication, the ruts of the roads were deep, the descents precipitous, and the way often such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dusk, from the unenclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides. It was only in fine weather that the whole breadth of the road was available; for, in wet, the mud lay deep both on the right and the left, and only a narrow track of firm ground rose above the quagmire on each hand. Almost every day coaches stuck fast, until teams of cattle could be procured from some neighbouring farm, to tug them out of the slough in which they were imbedded. On the best highways, heavy goods were generally conveyed by stage waggon, in the straw of which nestled a crowd of passengers, who were not able to ride on horseback, and could not afford to indulge in the luxury of a coach. The expense of transmitting heavy goods was enormous. From London to Birmingham, the charge was £7 a ton; and from London to Exeter it was £12. The cost of conveyance amounted to a prohibitory tax on many useful articles; and coal, in particular, was never seen except in the districts where it was produced, or in the districts to which it was conveyed by water. On by-roads, and generally throughout the country north of York and west of Exeter, goods were carried by long trains of pack-horses; and a traveller of humble condition often found it convenient to perform a journey, mounted on a pack-saddle, and seated between two baskets. The rich commonly travelled in their own carriages, drawn by at least four horses, and often by six, because, with a less number, there was great danger of sticking fast. Flying coaches ran thrice a week from London to the chief towns; but no stage-coach, indeed no stage-waggon, appears to have proceeded further north than York, or further west than Exeter. The ordinary day's journey of a *flying* coach was about fifty miles in summer; and in winter, when the roads were bad and the nights were long, a little more than thirty. In Cornwall, in the fens of Lincolnshire, and among the hills and lakes of Cumberland, letters

were received only once a-week ; the letter-bags being carried on horseback, day and night, at the rate of about five miles an hour. Travellers, unless they were numerous and well armed, ran considerable risk of being stopped and plundered ; for the mounted highwayman was to be found on every main road, held an aristocratic position in the community of thieves, appeared in fashionable coffee-houses in the capital, and betted with men of quality on the race grounds of the country.

Most of Samuel Wesley's life was spent in rural districts ; and therefore amid the marshes, fens, forests, and heaths, the impassable roads, and the highway dangers just described. He was an author ; but printing presses in the country did not exist. He was a man of education and of public spirit ; but to obtain a newspaper was almost impossible. He was the head of a family ; but to get coals, and other imported household comforts at Wroote and at Epworth, was a thing never contemplated. He was a student ; but the difficulty and expense of conveying books from London to Lincolnshire were so great, that a folio was longer in reaching its way from Paternoster Row to Epworth, than it now is in reaching Kentucky. For a poor rector like him to buy and to get books, was a thing almost impracticable ; and to borrow, such as he wanted, was impossible. Few knights of the shire had libraries so good as may now universally be found in a servant's hall, or in the back parlour of a small shopkeeper. An esquire passed among his neighbours for a great scholar, if Hudibras, and Baker's Chronicles, Tarlton's Jests, and the Seven Champions of Christendom, lay in his hall window among his fishing rods and guns. Many lords of manors, in point of education, differed but very little from their menial servants ; and heirs of estates often had no better tutors than grooms and gamekeepers, and scarce attained learning enough to sign their names to a mittimus. Their chief serious employment was the care of their property. They examined samples of grain, handled pigs, and, on market days, made bargains over a tankard with corn merchants and drovers. Their chief pleasures were commonly derived from field sports, and from an unrefined sensuality. Their oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous terms of abuse were uttered with the broadest accent of their province ; while the litter of their farm-yards gathered under the windows of their bed-chambers, and cabbages and gooseberry bushes grew up to their very doors. These were

the kind of country neighbours which Samuel Wesley was privileged to have for a period of more than forty years.

The state of the common people may be judged from the state of those above them. Four-fifths of them, throughout the country, were employed in agriculture; and four shillings a-week were fair agricultural wages. There were few articles, important to the working man, as coffee, tea, sugar, &c., the price of which was not double what it is at present. Beer was much cheaper; and meat was also cheaper; but the latter was even then so dear that hundreds of thousands of families scarcely knew the taste of it. Bread, such as is now given to the inmates of a workhouse, was then seldom seen, even on the trencher of a shopkeeper or of a yeoman. The great majority of the nation lived almost entirely on rye, oats, and barley. Such was the general condition of Samuel Wesley's Lincolnshire parishioners.

We refrain, at present, from any lengthy remarks respecting the religion and morals of the nation. It may be added, however, that the manners of the people were exceedingly coarse and vicious. The discipline of workshops, of schools, and of private families was harsh to an extreme. The implacability of hostile factions was such as, at the present day, we can scarcely conceive. Sufferers by the law experienced but little mercy. Put an offender in the pillory, and it was well if he escaped with his life from the showers of stones and brick-bats thrown at him. Tie him to the cart's tail, and the crowd pressed round him, begging the hangman to give it to the fellow well, and to make him howl. Fights, compared with which a boxing match is a refined and humane spectacle, were among the favourite diversions of a large part of the town. Multitudes assembled to see gladiators hack each other in pieces; and shouted with delight when one of the combatants lost a finger or an eye. Prisons were hells on earth, and seminaries of every disease and of every crime.

It would not be difficult to multiply such facts as these; but enough has been said to show that when Samuel Wesley began his ministry, England and the English people were very different from what they are at present. The Christian minister even now has difficulties and discouragements; but, as a rule, he is almost a stranger to the trials encountered by young Wesley. For a penny he has his newspaper every morning; and for a trifle more he has his monthly review and magazine. He lives in an age when even

the poorest of his parishioners will hardly deign to ride in the stage-waggon, but all aspire to be conveyed by the swift railway train. Books are published by millions; and circulating libraries, in one shape or in another, may be found in almost every hamlet of the land. Education is general; and not merely country squires, but country peasants, study classical and scientific books. Work is plentiful; and, except in a few bucolic districts, wages are sufficient to make the poor man's cottage a neat and a happy home. It was otherwise one hundred and seventy-seven years ago, when Samuel Wesley, a young man of twenty-six years of age, first entered upon the office and duties of a clergyman of the Church of England.

[This chapter is chiefly taken from Macaulay, from Knight, from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and from Baxter's *Life and Times*.]

CHAPTER VI.

ORDINATION AND MARRIAGE.—1688-1689.

MR WESLEY took his degree of Bachelor of Arts at Oxford on the 19th of June 1688. Exactly seven weeks afterwards, he was ordained a deacon of the Church of England. He writes: "I tarried in Exeter College, though I met with some hardships I had before been unacquainted with, till I was of standing sufficient to take my Bachelor's degree; and not being able to subsist there afterwards, I came to London during the time of my Lord Bishop of London's suspension by the High Commission, and was instituted into deacon's orders by my Lord Bishop of Rochester, at his palace at Bromley, August 7, 1688." It is an incident worth remembering, that Mr Wesley left Oxford during the trial of the seven bishops, and was ordained amid the intense excitement which arose out of that event.

In the above quotation he makes mention of his "hardships" in Exeter College. We are left to guess what the hardships were; but remembering that, when he entered, all the money he had was only about forty shillings,—remembering that he remained in the college for nearly five years,—and remembering that, for that length of time, he had to support himself by serving others, and that the only assistance he received from his friends was a five shillings piece, there can be no difficulty in perceiving that his collegiate life must have been no ordinary struggle.

Mr Wesley was ordained a deacon at Bromley by the Bishop of Rochester, the well-known Dr Thomas Sprat. This prelate was a man of considerable eminence. He began life as a fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, where, on the death of Oliver Cromwell, he gave a specimen of his poetical talents in an "Ode to the Happy Memory of the late Lord Protector." He subsequently became a fellow of the Royal Society, chaplain to George, Duke of Bucking-

ham, chaplain in ordinary to King Charles II., canon of Windsor, Dean of Westminster, clerk of the closet to King James II., dean of the Chapel Royal, and Bishop of Rochester. He was an intimate friend of the poet Cowley, who, by his last will, left to his care his printed works and MSS. His preferment to the bench of bishops was considered as a reward for the service he rendered in drawing up, at the command of King Charles II., an account of the Rye House Plot. His known sympathy for James II. brought upon him a large amount of popular indignation; so much so that, at the trial of the seven bishops, while the air rang with loud huzzas for the persecuted prelates, it was also filled with execrations against Sprat and his fawning associates. Strangely enough, it was just at this time that Sprat ordained Samuel Wesley. An odd incident happened four years afterwards. His principles being so well known, Bishop Sprat was involved with others in an information laid before the Privy Council of a pretended conspiracy for restoring James II. Sprat was arrested, and kept under a strict guard for eleven days, but effectually cleared himself of the accusation. He was so much affected, however, by the danger to which it had exposed him, that, to the end of his days, he commemorated his deliverance by an annual thanksgiving. He died in 1713. Though somewhat of a time-server, he was a man of great ability. Dunton, in his "Characters of Eminent Conformists," is most extravagant in praising him: his style is matchless, his wit flowing, his thoughts deep, and his poems beautiful.

"Nature rejoiced beneath his charming power;
His lucky hand made everything a flower.
On earth the king of wits, (they are but few,)
And, though a bishop, yet a preacher too."

Samuel Wesley was ordained a priest of the Church of England, by Dr Compton, in St Andrew's Church, Holborn, on February 24, 1689. This was twelve days after the Prince and Princess of Orange were declared by parliament to be King and Queen of Great Britain.

Compton was a man even more remarkable than Sprat. He was the youngest son of Spencer, Earl of Northampton. On leaving the university, he went to the Continent, for the purpose of perfecting himself in the modern languages. After the restoration of Charles II., he became cornet of a regiment of horse; but soon resigned his commission, and devoted himself to the service of the

church. He successively became Canon-commoner of Christ-Church College, Rector of Cottenham, Master of St Crosse's Hospital, Canon of Christ-Church, Bishop of Oxford, Dean of the Royal Chapel, and finally Bishop of the diocese of London. He was intrusted with the education of the two princesses, Mary and Anne, whom he also afterwards married to the Princes of Orange and Denmark ; and their firmness in the Protestant religion was in a great measure owing to his instructions. For his steadfast opposition to Popery, and for refusing to become an instrument of ecclesiastical tyranny among the clergy of his diocese, he was suspended, by James II., from his Episcopal office, his name was struck from the list of the Privy Council, and he was deprived of his office as Dean of the Royal Chapel. His suspension was the reason why Samuel Wesley was ordained a deacon by the chameleon-like Dr Sprat. On the invasion of the Prince of Orange, he was restored to his Episcopal functions ; he performed the ceremony of crowning King William and Queen Mary ; was appointed one of the Commissioners for revising the Liturgy ; and laboured with much zeal to reconcile Dissenters to the Established Church. His spirit of moderation made him unpopular with the clergy, and, in all probability, checked his further promotion. He died in the same year as Bishop Sprat, at the age of eighty-one. Through the whole of a long life, he was exemplary in his moral conduct, and displayed the manners of a gentleman. He was a warm friend, a generous patron, a respectable writer, a faithful bishop, but a dull and inanimate preacher. Such were the two prelates who ordained Samuel Wesley.

At the time that Mr Wesley entered upon his ministerial career, there were, in the English Church, some of the most distinguished divines that it has ever had. There was Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, a prelate of great learning and piety, and whose "*Origines Sacre*" and "*Origines Britannicæ*" are still held in high esteem. There was Tillotson, the son of a Yorkshire clothier, who was raised to the see of Canterbury, and whose sermons, when published, were regarded as a standard of finished oratory, and still rank among the most popular in the English language. There was the godly Thomas Kenn, Bishop of Bath and Wells, the well-known author of the "*Morning and Evening Hymns*." There was William Sancroft, who took an active part in repairing St Paul's Cathedral after the dilapidations of the civil wars, and in rebuilding it after the great

fire of London; one of the seven bishops, who, for bearding King James II., was committed to the Tower; and who, for refusing the oath of allegiance to King William, lost his archbishopric; a timorous, but well-meaning man, laborious in his studies, and who is said to have written more with his own hand than any other person of his time. There was Robert South, a man of immense talents, though of harsh temper and ungoverned wit. There was Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, a most industrious writer, and author of the "History of the Reformation." There was John Sharp, Archbishop of York, an able preacher, and the author of seven volumes of valuable sermons. There was Thomas Tennison, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had the esteem of King James, attended Queen Mary during her last moments, faithfully reproved King William for his immoral practices, and officiated at the coronation of Queen Anne and of King George I.,—an able opponent of the infidel opinions of Hobbes; a defender of the Established Church against Popery; though not a brilliant, yet a clear and argumentative writer; and though a plain yet a forcible preacher. There was William Beveridge, Bishop of St Asaph, an eminent Oriental scholar, a distinguished theologian, and a man of great goodness and simplicity. There was White Kennett, a man of great literary labours, his judgment solid, his style easy, and who died Bishop of the diocese of Peterborough. There was Daniel Whitby, profoundly learned, who, in 1703, published in two volumes folio his able "Commentary on the New Testament," the result of fifteen years of close application. There was George Hooper, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and greatly distinguished both as a writer and divine. William Fleetwood, Bishop of Ely, an active prelate, an eloquent preacher, and a learned, industrious, and able writer. William Derham, the able author of "Physico-Theology." William Lowth, amiable and erudite, and the father of the bishop of that name. Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, a man of respectable scientific and classical attainments, but distinguished most for his Christian benevolence. Others might be mentioned, and, besides these, a large number of other clergy, who, though not so eminent for their learning and literary productions, were quite equal for unassuming and zealous piety.

It is scarce credible that, with such bishops at the head of the English Church, there should not be hundreds of quiet, godly, earnest, useful ministers, acting under them, all of them of the

same sterling character as Samuel Wesley. It is a great mistake to imagine that, up to the time of Samuel Wesley's sons, John and Charles, the English clergy were, almost without exception, ignorant, indolent, heterodox, worldly, and wicked. Doubtless there were a large number of such men; but there were likewise a large number of another and much better class.

At the same period, the Dissenters also had a considerable number of able and useful preachers. For example, there was Daniel Williams, the most influential Presbyterian minister of his day; the successor of Richard Baxter at Pinner's Hall, the author of six volumes of cumbrous controversy, and the founder of the magnificent library of Red Cross Street. There was Daniel Burgess, extremely popular on account of his quaint and familiar style of pulpit oratory. There was Benjamin Keach, once sentenced to stand in the pillory for publishing his "Child's Instructor," and whose "Travels of True Godliness" and "Scripture Metaphors" have been read by myriads; a man whom Dunton represents as mounted upon an Apocalyptic Beast, with Babylon before him, Zion behind him, and a hundred thousand bulls and bears roaring and ramping round about him. There was Vincent Alsop, a man of piety and worth, with a glowing fancy and a lively wit. There was Matthew Henry, whose labours as a preacher were almost incessant, and who yet found time to write one of the largest and most useful Expositions of the Holy Bible ever published. There was Matthew Sylvester, a man of "godly life and great ability in the ministerial work," to whom, as an intimate friend, Baxter left his "MS. Narrative of his Life and Times." And there were also still surviving not a few of the noble Nonconformist ministers ejected in 1662.

As Samuel Wesley was not only a Christian minister, but likewise an author of considerable eminence, this attempt at photographing portraits will scarce be perfect, without a passing glance at the literary and other celebrities, who were flourishing at the time of Wesley's ordination, and with some of whom he ran a literary race.

Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, was just rising into fame and power, and preparing the way for the high position which he occupied during the reign of Anne. John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, was just appointed commander-in-chief of the British forces. George Byng, the celebrated admiral, was beginning

One magistrate, while signing a warrant to apprehend him, dropped down dead.

Samuel Annesley was a large-hearted man, and was extensively useful. He had the care of all the Nonconformist churches in the capital upon him; and was the chief instrument in the education and subsistence of several ministers, of whose useful labours the church would otherwise have been deprived.

In 1672, when King Charles, for the sake of the Papists, unconstitutionally suspended for a little while the penal laws in matters of religion, Dr Annesley licensed a meeting-house in St Helen's Place, Bishopsgate Street, where he raised a large and flourishing church, of which he continued the pastor until his death. He was the main support of the morning lecture, and always laid aside a tenth part of his income for charitable purposes. He had a weekly meeting of ministers in his vestry at St Helen's Place; and, once a month, there were Latin disputations upon theology; but, as these engendered heated debates among the ministers, they were dropped. In the same meeting-house at St Helen's Place, Edmund Calamy was ordained in 1694, his being the first *public* ordination among the Dissenters for more than thirty years. Dr Annesley and five other ministers took part in the ordination service, which lasted nearly nine hours, from before ten o'clock in the morning to past six o'clock at night. During the last thirty years of his life he had uninterrupted peace of spirit, arising from an uninterrupted assurance of God's forgiving love. He closed his useful ministry, of more than fifty-five years' continuance, December 31st, 1696. His death occurred in Spittal Yard, and he lies interred in the burial-ground of St Leonard's, Shoreditch. His funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Daniel Williams, and, in an enlarged form, was published by Dunton in 1697, making a small volume of one hundred and fifty pages. Williams states in the biography, that Annesley was of so hale and hardy a constitution, as to endure the coldest weather without using hat, gloves, or fire. For many years he seldom drank anything but water, and, to the day of his death, he could read the smallest print without spectacles. He was an eminently useful man, and, in most things, a pattern worthy of imitation. A short time before he died his joy was such that he exclaimed, "I cannot contain it. What manner of love is this to a poor worm! I cannot express the thousandth part of the praise due to Christ.

I'll praise Thee, and rejoice that there are others that can praise Thee better!"

The celebrated Richard Baxter, who was no eulogist, remarks :—"Dr Annesley is a most sincere, godly, humble man,—an Israelite indeed: one that may be said to be sanctified from the womb." Dunton, his son-in-law, says—"He was a man of wonderful piety and humility. The great business and the pleasure of his life was to persuade sinners back to God. His Nonconformity created him many troubles; but they never altered the goodness and cheerfulness of his humour." Daniel Defoe was one of his congregation, and wrote an elegy respecting him, which Dunton published. Defoe, speaking of his early piety, says:—

"His pious course with childhood he began,
And was his Maker's sooner than his own :
The heavenly book he made his only school—
In youth his study, and in age his rule.
A Moses, for humility and zeal;
For innocence, a true Nathaniel;
Faithful as Abraham, or the truer spies;
No man more honest, and but few so wise :
Humility was his darling grace,
And honesty sat regent in his face.
A heavenly patience did his mind possess—
Cheerful in pain, and thankful in distress."

Dr Annesley had a large family. Dunton relates that when Dr Manton was baptizing one of Annesley's children, he was asked how many more he had? he replied, he believed it was either two dozen or a quarter of a hundred. Of these four or five-and-twenty young Annesleys, however, Dr Clark could find not more than the names of seven—viz., Samuel, Benjamin, Judith, Sarah, Ann, Elizabeth, and Susanna. Samuel went abroad in the service of the East India Company, accumulated a considerable fortune, and intended to return to England; but, all at once, he suddenly disappeared, and no account was ever received, either of his person or of his property. The probability is that he was robbed and murdered.* Benjamin Annesley was "an ingenuous youth," and

* About the year 1720, Samuel Annesley, strangely enough, employed his brother-in-law, Samuel Wesley, to act as his agent in England; and the result was a serious quarrel. Annesley charged him with having received sums of money for which he had never accounted, and for having laid out moneys contrary to explicit orders. Mrs Wesley took up the matter, and, in a long letter, defended her husband against the attacks of her brother. She says, Mr Wesley has orders for the money laid out; and that, though his expenses had been great,

was appointed an executor of his father's will. Judith was eminently pious, and loved good books more than other young ladies loved fine clothes. She was exceedingly beautiful; and refused to marry a gentleman of splendid fortune because he was addicted to his cups. Of Sarah, we find no information. Ann was a wit, and was as fine a woman as nature and art ever formed. She married Mr James Fremantle; and Dunton says, she was the only person he ever knew whom an estate made more humble. Her life was one continued act of tenderness, wit, and piety. Elizabeth Annesley will be mentioned hereafter. Susanna became the wife of Samuel Wesley.

Having sketched the life of the father of Susanna Wesley, a few lines must be devoted to her mother. It is a remarkable fact, that as the father of Samuel Wesley's mother was named John White, so the father of Susanna Wesley's mother was named John White also. Both of them were men of mark. John White, "the Patriarch of Dorchester," is brought before the reader in Chapter II. The other John White, the grandfather of Susanna

they were honest. Mr Wesley, in attending to Mr Annesley's business, had been compelled to be much from home, and, therefore, had been compelled to hire a curate to supply his place. Besides, Annesley had promised him a commission for business done on his account during the three years Wesley sat in Convocation, but the commission had not been paid. Mrs Wesley proposed to refer all their disputes to arbitration; and says, that if Mr Wesley is found to be in Mr Annesley's debt, both she and her husband are quite willing for him to sequester the Epworth living in payment. Annesley had alleged that the Epworth living was worth £300 a-year, and that, on account of the difference in the cost of maintenance, this was equal to a living of £1000 a-year in London and its immediate neighbourhood. Mrs Wesley says, "it may full as truly be said that the Epworth living is £10,000 as £300; and even were it £300, there is no such difference in the price of provision as to justify" Annesley's computation. In fact, the living did not yield them, in clear money, more than £130 a-year; and, all things considered, it was quite as costly to live at Epworth as it was to live in London. Mrs Wesley then declares that her husband challenges the whole world to prove him a knave; that she conceals the wants of her family from him as much as possible, because, if he were made acquainted with each particular, he would hazard his health, perhaps his life, in riding to borrow money, rather than his wife and his children should be so distressed. She adds—"He hath not deceived you; and, to say the truth, among all his wants sincerity is none. I have not reason to complain of his being deceitful, but have often blamed him for speaking his mind too freely. You think him too zealous for the party he fancies in the right, and that he has unluckily to do with the opposite faction. Mr Wesley is not factious. He is zealous in a good cause, as every one ought to be; but the furthest from being a party man of any man in the world." The whole of this very long and painfully-interesting letter may be read in the *Wesleyan Times* for January 15, 1866.

Wesley, is too important a character to be overlooked. He was the son of Henry White, of Heylan, in Pembrokeshire, where he was born, June 29, 1590. He entered Jesus College, Oxford, when about seventeen years of age; and, after completing his studies, was admitted to the Middle Temple, and, in due time, became a member of the Bar, and a bencher of that society. While a barrister, he was much employed by the Puritans in the purchase of impropriations, which were to be given to those of their own party. In 1640, he was elected Member of Parliament for the borough of Southwark. He now joined in all the proceedings which led to the overthrow of the Established Church. He was appointed chairman of the Committee for Religion, and was also a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. In a speech of his, made in the House of Commons, and published in 1641, he contends that the office of bishop and presbyter is the same; and that the offices of deacons, chancellors, vicars, surrogates, and registrars, are all of human origin, and ought to be abolished, as being altogether superfluous and of no service to the Church. He says that Episcopacy had been intrusted with the care of souls for more than eighty years; and now, as a consequence, nearly four-fifths of the churches throughout the kingdom were held by idle or scandalous ministers. He alleges that, even during the present parliament, the House of Commons and its committees had been furnished with abundant evidence that it was of no use to report "scandalous ministers" to their bishops, for they received no censure, save a harmless admonition; while, on the other hand, if the bishops happened to discover a godly and learned preacher within the limits of their diocese, they did their utmost to scatter his congregation, and to expel him from his church. He admits that some of the bishops are good men; but the bishops who are good men, are all bad bishops,—a sufficient proof, in his estimation, that the very office is itself a curse.

The speech, from which the above is taken, fills fourteen small quarto pages, is full of texts of Scripture, and as dry as a lawyer's eloquence could make it.

As already stated, John White was appointed chairman of the Committee for Religion. It was the duty of that committee to receive all petitions of parishioners against their pastors, with lists of ministerial misdemeanours. In 1643, one hundred examples of those *scandalous clergy* were drawn up by White, and were

published in a book, entitled, "The First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests." In the preface, White says, "The ensuing summary declaration of the grounds whereupon Parliament had proceeded against divers ministers to sequester their benefices from them, and place in their room godly and learned preachers of the Word of God, may serve many excellent purposes—as 1, To show that the Episcopal form of church government is evil, and that parliament had good cause to abolish it; 2, That the bishops had not only neglected their duties, but had appointed to benefices drunkards, whoremongers, and adulterers; 3, The book will show what sort of men the clergy are who favour the king; and 4, The cause of the general ignorance and debauchery of the gentry and people of this kingdom."

White then gives the one hundred examples of scandalous parsons. These examples now lie before us, but they are too gross and defiling to be reprinted. The curious reader, anxious to know what they are, may find them in the British Museum, bound up in a volume, given to the Museum by George III. The pamphlet is quarto, and contains fifty-seven pages. White promised to publish a "Second Century" of cases, but he either was unable to find sufficient materials, or perhaps his intention was frustrated by his death, which occurred a few months after. Eight thousand clergy were ejected from their livings during the civil wars, on the ground of heterodoxy, viciousness of life, superstition, or malignancy against parliament: but White has given the character of one hundred only. Clarendon says, that petitions were often presented by a few of the rabble, and against the general sense and judgment of the parish. He avers that many were designated "scandalous clergy," who were men of great gravity and learning, and who lived the most unblemished lives. He adds, that White was "a grave lawyer, but notoriously disaffected to the Church." Of course Clarendon knew the men, but his party feeling was such that what he says requires to be received with caution.

John White died shortly after the publication of his "First Century of Scandalous, Malignant Priests," viz., on the 29th of January 1644, and was buried in the Temple Church, where a marble stone was afterwards placed upon his grave, with this inscription:—

"Here lyeth a John, a burning, shining light,
His name, life, actions, were all *White*."

Such was the grandfather of Susanna Wesley. Her mother was one of whom but very little has been left on record. She was a woman of sincere piety. She conscientiously endeavoured to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She was greatly loved by her husband, and both lie buried in the same sacred grave.

After the faithful and beautiful portraiture of Susanna Wesley, recently published by the Rev. John Kirk, it would be worse than superfluous to relate her history here. We wish that her letters were published in a collected form, not only because of their intrinsic excellence, but also because they would help to depict her refined intellect and her earnest piety. She was in all respects a remarkable woman. Like her father, she was godly from childhood. When she died, in 1742, her sons had four verses inscribed on her tombstone, teaching, if they teach anything, that she was not received into the divine favour until she attained the age of seventy. This is a monstrous perversion of facts, and can only be accounted for on the ground that John and Charles Wesley were so enamoured of their blessed and newly-discovered doctrines, that as yet they felt it difficult to think any one to be scripturally converted except those who had obtained a sense of pardon, and had experienced an instantaneous change of heart, under circumstances similar to their own. If Susanna Wesley was not converted many a long year previous to her death, and previous to the conversion of her sons, we have yet to learn what conversion is. Having read her letters and her other literary productions, we are satisfied that, if there ever was a sincere and earnest Christian, she was one.

Her intellectual was as remarkable as her Christian character. Let any one read her writings, and, unless he is blinded with prejudice, he will willingly acknowledge that, for vigorous thought, mental discipline, clearness of apprehension, logical acumen, extensive theological knowledge, purity of style, and force of utterance, Susanna Wesley has few superiors. She was not a poetess, but, if such language may be used concerning a lady, she was an accomplished scholar, a learned student, a correct philosopher, and a profound divine. Dr A. Clarke observes, "She appears to have had the advantage of a liberal education, as far as Latin, Greek, and French enter into such an education." Though her knowledge of these languages might be far from perfect, yet the

CHAPTER VII.

THE "ATHENIAN GAZETTE."—1690-1695.

IN 1691 or thereabouts, Mr Wesley was appointed to the parish of South Ormsby, a neat Lincolnshire village, about eight miles north-west of Spilsby. It is pleasantly situated, and, in 1821, the parish, including the adjoining hamlet of Kettlesby, contained thirty-six dwelling-houses, and two hundred and sixty-one inhabitants, a population probably quite equal to what it was in the days of Samuel Wesley. The church consists of a tower, a nave, and a chancel, with a small chapel on the northern side, and is dedicated to St Leonard.*

This was no serious charge for a young clergyman of twenty-eight years of age, and possessed of learning and ability like those of Samuel Wesley; yet here, among his flock of two hundred men, women, and children, he resided and faithfully laboured for about the next five years. The living was obtained for him without any solicitation on his part, by the Marquis of Normanby. Its emoluments were £50 a year, and a house to live in.† The house was little better than a mud-built hut, and Samuel Wesley in describing it and his own life in it, writes:—

"In a mean cot, composed of reeds and clay,
Wasting in sighs the uncomfortable day;
Near where the inhospitable Humber roars,
Devouring by degrees, the neighbouring shores.
Let earth go where it will, I'll not repine,
Nor can unhappy be, while heaven is mine."

Here, in this miserable hovel, Wesley and his noble young wife resided. Here five of their children were born, and here Wesley wrote some of the most able works he ever published. Samuel

* *History of the County of Lincoln.*

† Mr Kirk says the living of South Ormsby now brings in more than five times that amount.

Wesley was one of the rural clergy, but differed widely from the great mass of his brethren, who are thus described by Macaulay:—

"The rural clergyman, generally, began life as a young Levite, who every day said grace, at the table of a coarse ignorant squire, in full canonicals; and received, as pay, his board, a small garret, and ten pounds a year. In fine weather, he was always ready for bowls; and in rainy weather, for shovelboard. Sometimes he nailed up apricots, and sometimes curried coach horses, and cast up farriers' bills. He was permitted to dine with the family; but was expected to content himself with the plainest fare. A waiting woman was generally considered as the most suitable helpmeet for him. Quitting his chaplainship for a benefice and a wife, he found he had only exchanged one class of vexations for another. Often it was only by toiling on his glebe, by feeding swine, and by loading dungcarts, that he could obtain daily bread; nor did his utmost exertions always prevent the bailiffs from taking his concordance and his inkstand in execution. It was a white day on which he was admitted into the kitchen of a great house, and regaled by the servants with cold meat and ale. His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasants. His boys followed the plough, and his girls were sent out to service. Study he found to be impossible, for the advowson of his living would hardly have sold for a sum sufficient to purchase a good theological library; and he might be considered as unusually lucky, if he had ten or twelve dog-eared volumes among the pots and pans on his household shelves. It is true that at that time (1685) there was no lack in the English Church of ministers distinguished by abilities and learning; but these men were to be found, with scarce a single exception, at the universities, at the great cathedrals, or in the capital. Barrow had lately died at Cambridge, and Pearson had gone thence to the Episcopal bench. Cudworth and Henry More were still living there; South and Picocke, Jane and Aldrich were at Oxford. Prideaux was at Norwich, and Whitby at Salisbury. In London were Sherlock, Tillotson, Sprat, Wake, Jeremy Collier, Burnett, Stillingfleet, Fowler, Sharp, Tennison, and Beveridge. Of these, ten became bishops and four archbishops. Thus the Anglican priesthood was divided into two sections—one trained for cities and courts, comprising men familiar with all ancient and modern learning; men able to encounter Hobbes or Bossuet at all the weapons of controversy; men

who could, in their sermons, set forth the majesty and beauty of Christianity with such justness of thought, and such energy of language, that the indolent Charles roused himself to listen, and the fastidious Buckingham forgot to sneer; men with whom Halifax loved to discuss the interests of empires, and from whom Dryden was not ashamed to own that he had learned to write. The other section was destined to render humbler service. It was dispersed over the country, and consisted chiefly of persons not at all wealthier, and not much more refined, than small farmers or upper servants. And yet, it was in these rustic priests, who derived their scanty subsistence from their tithe sheaves and tithe pigs, and who had not the smallest chance of ever attaining high professional honours, that the professional spirit was strongest. Among those divines, who were the boast of the universities, and the delight of the capital, a party leaned towards constitutional principles of government, lived on friendly terms with Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists, would gladly have seen a full toleration granted to all Protestant sects, and would even have consented to make alterations in the Liturgy, for the purpose of conciliating honest and candid Nonconformists. But such latitudinarianism was held in horror by the country parson. He was, indeed, prouder of his ragged gown than his superiors of their lawn and of their scarlet hoods. The very consciousness that there was little in his worldly circumstances to distinguish him from the villagers to whom he preached, led him to hold immoderately high the dignity of that sacerdotal office, which was his single title to reverence."

We raise no objection to this graphic description of the country clergy living about the time that Samuel Wesley was appointed to South Ormsby. We believe it to be strictly accurate; and yet to all general rules there are exceptions, and, in this instance, Samuel Wesley was one. It is true that he was poor and pinched. It is quite possible that he sometimes found it necessary to load his dungcart, plough his glebe, and feed his swine; but Samuel Wesley was not the man to waste his time at bowls and shovelboard; or to stoop to the indignity of being regaled, by servants, with cold meat and ale, in the kitchen of the squire's forbidden hall. His children might be coarsely clad, but his boys never followed the plough, nor did his girls go out to service. His fifty pounds a year might afford him next to nothing to buy books; and yet, somehow

he read most of the best books in the English language. He was most faithfully devoted to the service of the Church ; but he was far too great a man to think that the mere accidents of the sacerdotal office were sufficient to raise him above his neighbours. He was a country parson ; but in learning, mental abilities, and the faithful discharge of ministerial duties, he differed from his country brethren, and was not unworthy to be ranked and associated with the greatest men at that time flourishing in the universities, in cathedrals, and in the capital. He might, like hundreds of others, have spent his time in agricultural toils and village sports, but there was within him the stirring of a high-born genius, which, wherever it exists, invariably impels its possessor to rise above the mediocrity of the common herd, and to attempt something honourable to the man who does it, and of service to those on whose behalf he labours. Human humdrums have always been inconveniently numerous, but Samuel Wesley was not one of them.

As already stated, he was the clergyman of an obscure village, with about two hundred inhabitants. There was plenty of opportunity to live a lazy life. He might have droned away his time, and wasted "the uncomfortable day in sighs ;" but, like all men of genius and of mark, he could be happy only by being hard at work. His scanty income, and his increasing family, might be one of the inducements which led him to devote himself to literary labour ; but had his income been even larger than his necessities required, it is almost certain that he would have pursued the same course of conduct ; for, to a literary man, literary labour is not merely toil, but likewise luxury.

Samuel Wesley's first publication was the "Maggots," already noticed. His next undertaking was the *Athenian Gazette*, projected by his brother-in-law, John Dunton, just before Wesley removed from London to South Ormsby. The title of the new work was the "*Athenian Gazette; or, Casuistical Mercury, Resolving all the Nice and Curious Questions Proposed by the Ingenious.*" The *Gazette* was published twice a week, every Tuesday and Saturday, each number consisting of a single folio. The first number made its appearance on Tuesday, March 17, 1691, and the last on June 14, 1697. Each number was sold at one penny, and thirty numbers, that is, sixty pages, made what was called a volume ; and which, stitched in marble paper, was sold for half-a-crown. In the first number that was issued, seven questions are answered in

the following order, viz. :—1. Whether the torments of the damned are visible to the saints in heaven? 2. Whether the soul is eternal, or pre-existent from the creation, or contemporary with its embryo? 3. Whether every man has a good and bad angel attending him? 4. Where was the soul of Lazarus for the four days he lay in the grave? 5. Whether all souls are alike? 6. Whether it is lawful for a man to beat his wife? 7. How came the spots in the moon?

In an advertisement, at the end of No. 1, correspondents are requested to send their questions, "by a penny post letter, to Mr Smith's, at his Coffee-house, in Stock's Market, in the Poultry."

As already stated, thirty numbers made what was called a volume; but to each of the first five volumes was attached a supplement, quite as large as the volume itself, containing "the transactions and experiments of the foreign virtuosos, and also their ingenious conferences upon many nice and curious questions; together with an account of the design and scope of most of the considerable books printed in all languages, and the quality of the author, if known."

Wesley and his friends were soon inundated with questions; so much so, that in the preface to vol. ii., they say they have nearly four thousand on hand unanswered; they also request that no obscene questions be sent, for they are resolved not to answer them; nor riddles, for riddles are of no use to the general public; nor anything else, the answer to which may be a scandal to the Government, or an abuse to particular persons.

During the publication of the first six volumes, the *Athenian Gazette* was issued only twice a week; but afterwards the numbers were published every Monday, Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday, until the completion of the nineteenth volume, when it was announced that, "as the coffee-houses have the votes every day, and nine newspapers every week, the Athenian Society propose to drop the publication of sheets four days a week, and henceforth to publish the work in volumes quarterly. Thirty numbers, to make volume xx., would be printed all together; but as soon as the glut of news was a little over, the weekly numbers would again commence."

Eight years after, in 1703, the old Athenian volumes being out of print, "a collection of all the valuable questions and answers" was printed in three volumes; and, in 1710, a fourth volume was added, as a supplement, "being a collection of the remaining questions and answers in the old *Athenian Gazettes*." This work had

a rapid sale, and, in 1704, a second edition was published, with a dedication to the Earl of Ormond, written by Mr Wesley.

The publication of the *Athenian Gazette* first occurred to Dunton whilst he was walking in St George's Fields. The object of the work was to receive and to answer questions in all departments of literature. Finding assistance necessary, Dunton first engaged the services of Richard Sault, a man who "was admirably well skilled in the mathematics." Then the ingenious Dr Norris generously offered his help *gratis*; but refused to become a stated member of the Athenian Society. The undertaking grew every week, and hundreds of letters poured in. Dunton writes, "The impatience of our querists, and the curiosity of their questions, obliged us to adopt a third member of Athens; and the Rev. Samuel Wesley being just come to town, all new from the university, and my acquaintance with him being very intimate, I easily prevailed with him to embark himself with us. With this new addition, we found ourselves to be masters of the whole design; and therefore we neither lessened nor increased our number."

The original "articles of agreement between Samuel Wesley, clerk, Richard Sault, gent., and John Dunton, for the writing of the *Athenian Gazette, or Mercury*, dated April 10, 1691," may still be seen among Dunton's MSS. in the Bodleian Library.

When the *Athenian Gazette* was fairly and fully launched, a rival paper, entitled the *Lacedemonian Mercury*, was published by Brown & Pate. This was a trifling and even profane performance. The sole purpose of the writers "seemed to be to laugh and ridicule solidity and seriousness out of the world."* This aroused the ire and energies of Wesley, Sault, and Dunton, and they succeeded in putting down the rival and ungodly upstart. A little later, an attack was made upon their publication, by Elkanah Settle, who brought out a play, entitled "The New Athenian Comedy; containing the Politicks, Oeconomicks, Tacticks, Crypticks, Apocalypticks, Stypticks, Scepticks, Pneumaticks, Theologicks, and Dogmaticks of our most learned Society." Settle was born at Dunstable, in 1648, and was educated at Trinity College, Oxford. He began life by publishing two political pamphlets, which were publicly burnt, on the accession of James II.† After this, he turned Tory, wrote a poem on James's coronation, and published an essay

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iv. p. 69.

† Dryden's *Mis. Works*, vol. i., notes, p. 67, 1760.

necessary to publish the "Secret History of Mr Sault," so as to clear himself from the imputation of sham or fraud in giving to the public such a narrative; and yet, it is a singular circumstance, that, nearly a hundred years afterwards, John Wesley republished the greater part of "The Second Spira" in his *Arminian Magazine*, without a single line of explanation that the piece, though powerfully written, was almost altogether false. Richard Sault ultimately removed to Cambridge, where his ingenuity and his algebraic skill obtained for him a considerable reputation. He died there in 1704, being supported in his last sickness by the charity of the scholars. He was interred in St Andrew's Church, Cambridge; and a writer, who knew him, says, "his learning was as universal as his sense of things was fine and curious."

Among the principal contributors to the *Athenian Gazette* were Daniel Defoe, already sketched, Dr Norris, Nahum Tate, Dean Swift, Sir William Temple, and Mrs Rowe.*

John Norris was born at Collingborne-Kingston, in Wiltshire, in 1657, and died at Bemerton, in the same county, in 1711. He was educated first in Winchester School, and afterwards in the same college, at Oxford, as that which Samuel Wesley entered. He was elected Fellow of All Souls' College, and, shortly after Wesley left Oxford, he was presented to the rectory of Newton St Loe, and, two years later, to that of Bemerton. He was a pious, learned, and ingenious man, but had a tincture of enthusiasm in his nature, which led him to imbibe the principles of the idealists in philosophy and of the mystics in theology. A late writer says of him, "In metaphysical acumen, in theological learning, and in purity of diction, Dr Norris acknowledges no superior. He carries the whole circle of the sciences in his head, and piety and religion illustrate all his actions. Never was any question proposed by ingenious malice or curiosity, but, with the utmost readiness and facility, he gave not only fair and amusing ideas of it, but full and most evident demonstrations. He was good, great, and learned; and a worthy companion of so great a man as Samuel Wesley."† His greatest work is "The Theory of the Ideal World," but, besides that, he published several others.

* It has been said that Matthew Wesley was a member of the Athenian Society; but, after a careful examination of the evidence alleged in proof of this, I strongly doubt it.

† *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iv. p. 26-7.

Nahum Tate was poet-laureate to King William III. He was born in Dublin in 1655, and educated in the Dublin University. On coming to London, he fell into pecuniary difficulties, from which he was relieved by the Earl of Dorset. He was the author of nine dramatic pieces, and of a variety of miscellaneous poems, now deservedly forgotten. His name is principally known by his version of the Psalms, generally affixed to the Liturgy of the Church of England, and in the composition of which he was assisted by Dr Brady.

Jonathan Swift, another of the Athenian contributors, was a marvellous mortal. One of his earliest poetical productions was a commendatory poem of 307 lines sent to the Athenian Society. Dryden read it, and said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." Dr Johnson says that this unfortunate remark caused Swift to regard Dryden with malevolence to the end of life. His "Tale of a Tub," "Gulliver's Travels," and other works are too well known to need description. He was a man of amazing genius, but never ought to have been a priest. During his residence in Dublin University, he incurred no less than seventy penalties for irregularities; and, in the last year of his residence, his academical degree was suspended, and he was sentenced to ask public pardon of the junior dean for insolence. In his personal habits he was scrupulously nice; and yet there are passages in his writings almost as gross as his pen could make them. As an author, he is perhaps not surpassed for originality, and it has been said of him that he never borrowed a thought from any man. In some matters he was ludicrously penurious. Once when going from Sir William Temple's to his mother's, he travelled the whole distance on foot, except when the violence of the weather drove him into stage waggons; and, at nights, put up at penny lodgings, where, to secure himself from filth, he hired clean sheets for sixpence; and yet with all this he can hardly be called a man of avarice, for he seems to have saved only that he might have the more to give. Three years before his death, he became insane, and sunk into a lethargy, in which he remained speechless for a year. He left the greater part of his fortune to an hospital for lunatics and idiots. He died in 1744. The pranks and puns of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St Patrick's, are endless. The common people received him everywhere with profound respect; and upon one occasion, he made a laughable experiment on the public

belief in his authority. A number of the people having assembled round the deanery to see an eclipse, Swift became tired of their commotion, and directed the town crier to make proclamation, that the eclipse was postponed, by command of the Dean of St Patrick's, which had the effect of dispersing the assembled star-gazers.

Sir William Temple was a frequent contributor to the *Athenian Gazette*. This eminent statesman was a pupil of the learned Dr Hammond, his maternal uncle. As an author, he was pleasing and popular, his style being long regarded as a model of grace and elegance. He died at Moor Park, in 1698, where, in accordance with his will, his heart was buried in a silver box under the sun-dial, opposite to a window where he had been accustomed to contemplate and admire the works of nature; while his body was privately interred in Westminster Abbey.

The last contributor, we mention, was Mrs Rowe, who supplied "a variety of inimitable poems." "She was," says Dunton, "the richest genius of her sex. She knew the purity of our tongue, and conversed with as much briskness and gaiety as she wrote. Her style is noble and flowing, and her images vivid and shining." Mrs Rowe, at this time, was not more than twenty years of age; but she had cultivated music, painting, and poetry from her childhood. She afterwards studied French and Italian, and enjoyed the friendship of some of the most eminent literati of her day. She died in 1737, and, shortly after her death, Dr Isaac Watts published her "Devout Exercises of the Heart." A year or two afterwards, appeared her miscellaneous works, in prose and verse, in two volumes octavo.

These were the principal writers who assisted Samuel Wesley, Richard Sault, and John Dunton in the publication of their *Athenian Gazette*. The history of the Athenian Society was afterwards written by Charles Gildon, and published in a folio of thirty-six pages. Gildon was a native of the same county as Samuel Wesley, and about the same age. He was educated at Douay for a popish priest, but, not liking the priestly office, he plunged into dissipation, and added to his financial embarrassments by an imprudent marriage at the age of twenty-three. Necessity obliged him to turn author, and he produced a variety of works in prose and verse. He died in 1723. Pope gave him a place in his "Dunciad;" but Dunton says he was well "acquainted

with the languages, and wrote with a peculiar briskness which the common hacks could not boast of."

Gildon tells us that the whole design of the Athenian Society was "not only to improve knowledge in divinity and philosophy, in all their parts, as well as philosophy in all its latitude, but also to commend this improvement to the public in the best method that can be found out for instruction. In their *Gazettes* may be found the marrow of what great authors have writ on curious subjects. The society have set learning in so fair a light, that, won with its beauty, every one must with eagerness embrace it. All the knotty points of philosophy, divinity, mathematics, &c., are formed into queries by the inquisitive, and answered by the society, who are not only men of parts, but also industrious to the highest degree. They are men of sense, and piety, and patience. Horace never had half the fatigue with the poetaster, as they must have had with both male and female impertinencies. One correspondent wishes to know whether any two men have the same number of hairs on their heads; another wishes to know whether it be lawful to eat black puddings; and another whether the devil takes a human form in foreign countries. There are hundreds of such questions asked and answered. Indeed queries came in so fast, that in the third number of the *Gazette* the public were requested to send no more till those already sent had received replies."

Gildon then proceeds to give an account of the principal contributors. Of Samuel Wesley he says, "He was a man of profound knowledge, not only of the Holy Scriptures, of the councils, and of the fathers, but also of every other *Art* that comes within the number of the *liberal*. His zeal and ability in giving spiritual directions were great. With invincible power he confirmed the wavering, and confuted heretics. Beneath the genial warmth of his wit, the most barren subject became fertile and divertive. His style was sweet and manly, soft without satiety, and learned without pedantry. His temper and conversation were affable. His compassion for the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, was as great as his learning and his parts. Were it possible for any man to act the part of a universal priest, he would certainly deem it his duty to take care of the spiritual good of all mankind. In all his writings and actions, he evinced a deep concern for all that bear the glorious image of their Maker; and was so apostolical in

his spirit, that pains, labours, watchings, and prayers were far more delightful to him than honours to the ambitious, wealth to the miser, or pleasures to the voluptuous." Such, in substance, is Gildon's character of Wesley. He adds, "It were to be wished that a great many of the clergy would have him in view, as a sure direction of their behaviour, since an imitation of his practical virtues would confute the profane enemies of that sacred body, by the most prevalent of arguments, *example*."

Gildon was doubtless well acquainted with Wesley ; and hence such a testimony is too important to be omitted.

It is impossible, in a work like this, to give a full idea of the vast and varied learning embodied in these old *Athenian Gazettes*. Error is confuted, and superstitions and follies ridiculed. Many of the most perplexing questions in divinity are discussed with great ability. Philosophy is handled with equal excellence. All sorts of questions relating to metaphysics, astronomy, mathematics, law, anatomy, and, even love and courtship, are answered with consummate care. It cannot be denied, that the work contains things which would now be deemed gross and indelicate ; but some allowance must be made, on the ground that the literary tastes of the people were, at that time, widely different from what they are at present ; and, it must also be observed further, that, in the articles bearing upon divinity, history, poetry, and natural philosophy, (upon all of which subjects Samuel Wesley may be presumed to have written,) there is not a line offensive to good taste, though, of course, opinions are expressed which may fairly be disputed.

Dr Adam Clarke writes, respecting the *Athenian Oracle*, "No reader can peruse them, (the volumes,) without profit ; for although the authors submitted to answer questions of little or no importance, yet the work at large contains many things of great value. When I was little more than a child, an odd volume of the *Athenian Oracle*, lent me by a friend, was a source of improvement and delight ; and now I consult this work with double interest, knowing the well-nerved hand, by which at least one-third of it was composed."

We cannot state, with certainty, what articles in the *Athenian Gazettes* were written by Samuel Wesley ; but, as he was the only clergyman in the Athenian Society, it may fairly be presumed that he answered all, or nearly all, the questions relating to

divinity and to church history. He was also a poet, and there cannot be a doubt that many of the poetical pieces were likewise the productions of his genius.

In the indices of the *Athenian Oracle*, there is a list of about 2800 questions, and of these about 900 refer to theology and the history of the Church; so that it is not unreasonable to suppose, that one-third of the Athenian questions were answered by Mr Wesley. The following is a selection, and will tend to show the difficulties with which he courageously grappled:—

"1. Has every man an angel to attend him? 2. What was the cause of the fall of angels? 3. When did angels receive their first existence? 4. On what day did Adam fall? 5. Was Adam a giant? 6. Who was the first founder of Atheism? 7. What became of the ark after the flood? 8. Did the fall of Adam cause any alteration in his body? 9. Did Adam sin more than once? 10. What number of angels fell? 11. In what sense could angels eat? 12. Are there nine orders of angels? 13. How high was Babel's tower? 14. Of what sort of matter will glorified bodies consist? 15. What language was spoken by Balaam's ass? 16. Can the day of Christ's nativity be found out? 17. Who was Cain's wife? 18. What mark did God fix upon Cain? 19. Why was Christ not baptized till He was thirty years of age? 20. Are the torments of the damned visible to the saints? 21. Is the devil corporeal? 22. Does the devil know our thoughts? 23. Can the devil generate? 24. Why is not the name of God mentioned in the Book of Esther? 25. Have dead friends any concern for those alive? 26. Shall we know friends in heaven? 27. Are the ghosts that appear the souls of men? 28. Are the punishments of hell equal? 29. Who is the author of the Book of Job? 30. What language did our first parents speak in Paradise? 31. Were there any men before Adam? 32. Was Moses the author of the Pentateuch? 33. Why was man not made incapable of sinning? 34. Shall negroes rise at the last day? 35. Whither went the waters of Noah's flood? 36. Did Peter and Paul use notes when they preached? 37. How is the prescience of God consistent with man's free agency? 38. Was extempore prayer a primitive custom? 39. Are the marriages of Quakers lawful? 40. Whether would you choose to be a Quaker or a Papist? 41. Is repentance acceptable without sackcloth and ashes? 42. Is the soul of man pre-existent? 43. When was

the surplice first instituted? 44. How do spirits speak? 45. Whether is the soul by traduction or infusion? 46. Which was the greatest sin before the flood? 47. Why is sprinkling in baptism more lawful than dipping? 48. Will souls be equally happy in heaven? 49. Was Socinianism in St John's time? 50. What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? 51. Was there any shipping before the days of Noah? 52. When the soul leaves the body does she not put on another that is more subtle? 53. Whither went the ten tribes? 54. What do the Urim and Thummim signify? 55. Should women sit promiscuously with men at church? 56. Are there any absolute decrees? 57. Was not Abraham the first institutor of public schools? 58. Was not the creation of the world occasioned by the fall of Lucifer? 59. When do children begin to commit actual sin? 60. Do children suffer for the sins of parents? 61. Is dancing lawful? 62. What are Gog and Magog? 63. Are the torments of hell eternal? 64. Where is hell? 65. Was Melchisedec Christ, an angel, or a man? 66. Is it possible to live without the commission of sin? 67. Is the world eternal? 68. How far did the benefits of our Saviour's death extend? 69. If Christ suffered for all men, how do you expound John xvii. 9? 70. Will the earth be destroyed or refined? 71. Is a Dissenter a schismatic? 72. What is that faith without which there is no salvation? 73. Can faith be attained without the assistance of grace? 74. Does God universally pardon on condition of believing? 75. How shall infants and deformed persons rise at the day of judgment? 76. May a man who has taken holy orders lay aside his calling? 77. Does a regenerate man commit sin? 78. Is it possible to fall finally from a state of grace? 79. Is baptism a means of regeneration? 80. Did Christ actually descend into hell? 81. Do the English come from the seed of Abraham? 82. Is heaven promised to a certain number? 83. Is there any certainty of salvation in this life? 84. Was it the will of God to create the world from all eternity?"

These are about a tenth part of the biblical and theological questions answered by Samuel Wesley in the *Athenian Gazette*, and are given here for a twofold purpose; first, to suggest to youthful readers topics to think about; and secondly, to show the difficulties courageously encountered by Samuel Wesley, and the curious and daring character of his studies.

It would not be difficult to gather from the answers to the nine hundred biblical and theological questions in the *Athenian Gazette*, the principal points of Mr Wesley's creed. The longest theological articles are those levelled against the Baptists and the Quakers. One piece alone, written against the former, fills nearly fifty pages of the *Athenian Oracle*; and against the latter there are several articles, showing that the Lincolnshire rector was no ardent admirer of the broad-brimmed followers of George Fox. They are charged with intolerance, enthusiasm, silliness, and with holding dangerous opinions and detestable doctrines. A Quaker, in fact, was a mischievous and troublesome compendium of all sorts of heresies. Samuel Wesley, as a rule, was generous and liberal in his sentiments respecting others; but some sects and parties, at the close of the seventeenth century, were so fanatical, bigoted, bitter, and offensive, that he found it difficult to regard them with the same fraternal feelings with which he regarded Christian brotherhoods in general.

With one or two exceptions, the theological and religious views of Samuel Wesley were as Scriptural and as sound as the standard of Methodist teaching contained in the well-known Sermons and Notes of his son John. There may be a difference of phraseology between the father and son, but their doctrines are *substantially* the same. Our space forbids lengthened quotations; but perhaps the following extracts from the *Athenian Oracle* will not be unacceptable, as containing statements of Scripture doctrines, and as tending to exhibit the opinions of Mr Wesley on some of the most important verities of the Christian religion, and on some of the most interesting points of ecclesiastical polity.

Samuel Wesley was a firm believer in the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures. He contends that the Bible now used "is the same that was written by the apostles and prophets," and that, because they were "inspired by the Spirit of God," the Bible "is the very Word of God."*

He also had an unshaken faith in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. He argues that it "is impossible for a man to invent fuller or clearer expressions for the proof of anything in question than the evangelist St John" employs in favour of the doctrine of Christ's divinity. After adducing evidence of this, he concludes, with an air of conscious triumph, "When I see all this an-

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 260. 2d Edition.

swered, without straining it into perfect incongruous nonsense, I promise to turn Socinian."* "The Arians," says he,† in another place, "in some of their confessions of faith, did grant that the Son was from all eternity, by such an emanation from the Father as that whereby the light proceeds from the sun; but yet contended for a moment's difference between their existence—the Son receiving His, as they think, from the Father; whereby they unavoidably fell into the same absurdity which other pretenders to reason have since done—that, I mean, of a *made* God, or a *subordinate* Supreme." Language like this is unmistakable. Samuel Wesley was no dubious hesitator between two opinions. While yet a youth in Mr Morton's academy, he had been disgusted with the Socinian, Biddle; and, a few years later, he was the means of extricating one of the finest of intellects from Socinian meshes; for his own wife, Susanna Wesley, who, while a girl in her father's house, had reasoned herself into the Socinian creed, acknowledges it as one of the great mercies of her life, that, she was "married to a religious orthodox man, and by him was first drawn off from the Socinian heresy."

Samuel Wesley, like his son John, was a moderate Arminian. He fearlessly repudiates the doctrines of election and reprobation. "We cannot," says he, "be satisfied by any of those scriptures which are brought for that purpose, that there is any such *election* of a *determinate number* as either puts a force on their *natures*, and *irresistably* saves them, or absolutely excludes all the *rest* of mankind from salvation. We think there is no one place in the Holy Scriptures which proves that so many men, and no more, were *irresistably determined* to everlasting salvation."‡ He believed that "God predestinated those to salvation whom He foresaw would make a good use of His grace, resolving to damn only such as He foresaw would continue impenitent."§ He maintains that "God made man upright, and a free agent, and that God's prescience presides over man's free agency, but doth not overrule it, by saving man whether He will or no, or by damning him undeservedly.|| "God necessitates no evil action, yet He foresees all. If God tempts no man to evil, much less does He necessitate. Indeed, were He to do this, the nature of man would be destroyed, the proposal of rewards and punishments would be ironical, preach-

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 418.

† In Notes to his *Life of Christ*, p. 221.

‡ *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 178.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 111.

|| *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 58.

ing would be vain, and faith also vain. If you ask us to reconcile all the differences "arising out of the doctrines of God's prescience and man's free agency, we promise to do it when philosophers can solve the incommensurability of matter, and twenty other phenomena, and make them agree with demonstrations which appear diametrically opposite unto them. In the meantime, let us think soberly and modestly, as becomes us in these matters. Let every one enjoy his own sense, so he makes not God the author of sin, and let us all cry out, 'How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.'"*

Mr Wesley believed in the doctrine of universal redemption; in other words, that Jesus Christ "atoned so far for the sins of all mankind as to make them in a salvable condition, or to repair the ruins which were made by the first Adam, which is plain from Rom. v. 12, 18, &c."† "God really wills the salvation of all men, as far as is consistent with the liberty of man and His own purity and justice;" and He "has also used all the necessary means for our salvation;" "He offers pardon of all sin, and right to life in Christ, to all men without exception, on condition of believing and acceptance."‡

He further believed that no man can do an "action properly and perfectly acceptable to God by his own natural abilities, abstracted from the assistance of God's Spirit, but by His common assistance he may pray, abstain from sin, and practise duty; and, if he continues in these good actions, he will have still more aid, and go on to perfection."§

Respecting the doctrines of justification and justifying faith, Mr Wesley writes: "Forgiveness of sins is, at least, included in justification, nay, is the main part, if not the whole thereof. It may, without violence, be reckoned a convertible term with it. Our sins being pardoned, our being esteemed righteous by God, our justification through our Saviour's merits, we think are but the same thing in different expressions."|| "By God's justifying a sinner, is meant His looking upon us and treating us as just and innocent persons, although before we stood guilty of heinous sins, and thereupon liable to grievous punishments."¶ We are saved by the merits of Christ Jesus; for His sake, not our own; and this we look upon to be the same, in other words, as Christ's

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. ii. p. 101. † *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 531. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 531.

|| *Ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 140.

¶ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 455.

imputed righteousness.* “We are justified, or accepted with God, as a means, by faith, or a true belief of what God reveals, and by trusting in His mercy, through His Son.”† “But then this very faith must be justified by works, as Abraham’s was, for it would have been in vain for him to have pretended he had believed God’s promise to him, had he not, in obedience to His command, also offered up his son Isaac.”‡ That faith, without which there is no salvation, “is a steady belief of all that God reveals, especially in the gospel, particularly that Jesus is the Messiah, or Saviour of the world, and that He will save me, if I depend on Him, and obey His commands.”§ No follower of John Wesley holds the doctrine of justification by faith more clearly, or more firmly, than did John Wesley’s noble-minded father.

The new birth, writes the clear-headed and thoroughly orthodox young clergyman, “is that particular aid of God’s Holy Spirit, which works an entire change in the mind, and turns men from evil to good, being a new principle of action in them.”||

It is a remarkable fact, not generally known, that Samuel Wesley was a Millenarian. The Rev. William Lindsay Alexander, in an elaborate article in the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*” gives the following as the chief tenets of the Millenarian creed:—“That Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, the temple to be restored, and sacrifice again offered on the altar; that this city is to form the residence of Christ, who is to reign there in glory with all His saints for a thousand years; that, for this purpose, there shall be a resurrection of all the pious dead, that none of the Saviour’s followers may be absent during His triumph; that, at the close of the thousand years, they shall all return to heaven, and the world be left to Satan and his followers for a season; and that then the general resurrection and last judgment shall take place, and the history of the world be brought to a close.” In vol. iv. of the *Athenian Gazette*, the No. for October 17, 1691, is entirely occupied by a Millenarian article, which had been specially advertised on the Tuesday previous, and the following extract will show substantially the opinions held by Samuel Wesley:—“We believe, as all Christians of the purest ages did, that the saints shall reign with Christ on earth a thousand years; that this reign shall be immediately before the general resurrection, and after the

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 455.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. iii. p. 531.

† *Ibid.*

|| *Ibid.*, p. 460.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

calling of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles, and the destruction of Antichrist, whom our Saviour shall destroy by the *brightness of His coming*, and *appearance in heaven*; that at the beginning of this thousand years shall be the first resurrection, wherein martyrs and holy men shall rise and reign here in spiritual delights in the New Jerusalem, in a new heaven and new earth, foretold by the holy prophets." After this statement of his belief follows an able article on the same subject, but it is scarce within the province which we have prescribed for ourselves, to attempt either to refute or to establish the truth of it.

The following is a somewhat startling opinion respecting the future state of the righteous and wicked:—"They shall both arise equally immortal, and diversified in nothing but their last sentence. We shall then see not by receiving the visible species into the narrow glass of an organised eye; we shall then hear without the distinct and curious contexture of the ear. The body then shall be all eye, all ear, all sense in the whole, and every sense in every part. In a word, it shall be all over a common sensorium; and being made of the purest æther, without the mixture of any lower or grosser element, the soul shall, by one undivided act, at once perceive all that variety of objects which now cannot, without several distinct organs, and successive actions or passions, reach our sense. Every sense shall be perfect; the ear shall hear everything at once throughout the spacious limits both of heaven and hell, with a perfect distinction, and without confounding that *anthem* with this *blasphemy*; the eye shall find no matter or substance to fix it; and so of the other senses. The reason of this is plain and convincing; for, if the bodies of the just and unjust were not thus qualified, they could not be proper subjects for the exercise of an eternity, but would consume and be liable to a dissolution, or to new changes. Hence we assert, that every *individual person in heaven and hell* shall hear and see all that passes in either state; these to a more extensive aggravation of their tortures, by the loss of what the other enjoy; and those to a greater increase of their bliss, in escaping what the others suffer."*

Such are some of the chief theological views that were entertained by Samuel Wesley. Others might be added, but space forbids. He has been almost invariably represented as holding the principles of the High Church party; but nothing can be

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 3.

more unfounded than this. He preferred the Church of England to any other Church, and thought its doctrines, rituals, and devotions the best in existence. But where is the Methodist, or the Independent, or the Baptist, but what thinks and feels exactly the same respecting the ecclesiastical system to which he adheres? The man that does not prefer his own Church to any other Church is a man without principle; yea, a man whose principle is bad; for, in matters of supreme importance, he is adhering to a system of ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline, not because he thinks it the best, but to serve some other purpose—mercenary, mean, and miserable. Samuel Wesley thought the Church of England the best; but he was not the narrow-minded and little-hearted bigot to unchurch other churches, and deny that so far from being equally good, they were not good at all. Hear what he says on both subjects:—

“The *doctrine* of the Church of England we entirely embrace, otherwise we could not be Christians. We are ready to subscribe to her Articles, taking all of them, as we are verily persuaded, in the same sense which the compilers intended. For her *discipline*, we believe the *essentials* of it—*Liturgy* and *Episcopacy*—are agreeable to the primitive pattern and the Word of God. For her *rituals* and *devotions*—we are sure they are the most perfect and pure that any Church in the world now enjoys, and dare almost add, or ever did. There are not two *passages* in them, which we would desire to have changed; though, should the authority and wisdom of Church and State think fit to make any alterations as to words and smaller circumstances, for the sake of peace and union, we should think it our duty, modestly and gladly to submit.”* Wesley’s opinion of the clergy may be gathered from the following:—“It is not strange that, among so considerable a body of men, there should be found some who extremely disgrace their character, and are highly unworthy; but it is notorious, that all possible care is now taken that the clergy should lead such lives as they are obliged to by solemn vow and promise; and it is known that those who do not, are not so soon preferred as perhaps they might have been in former reigns. With some exceptions, the clergy of England are at this time as considerable a body, both for piety and learning, good preaching and good living, as any in

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 165.

the world, or perhaps, as any that have lived here in any age of the Church since the apostles. Of all those country parishes with which we are acquainted, we cannot, in fifty or threescore parishes, think of above three or four, who disgrace their character. So far from it, the pulpits are filled with sober and ingenious men, good preachers, and good livers."*

So much in reference to his opinion of the Church and its ministers. We add two quotations about dissent:—"A Christian Church becomes not more or less Christian by being national; but if a National Church agrees in doctrine with the doctrine of Christ, and Dissenters agree in doctrine with the National Church, neither of them are schismatics from the Church of Christ."† And again: "There is no real difference betwixt the Church of England and the Presbyterians as to the manner of worship and preaching. They are really one as to fundamentals; and any one so persuaded, may with a safe conscience communicate with either. Let those that keep up the partition wall, take heed lest they are thereby excluded out of the bond of charity, which makes all of one mind, and partakers of the same privileges."‡

This is scarce the language of a High Churchman, consigning Dissenters to the uncovenanted mercies of Almighty God. Samuel Wesley was of a temperament too painstaking, too ardent, and too sincere, to be a latitudinarian; but, at the same time, he was too good and too great a man to be a bigot.

Before leaving the *Athenian Gazette*, it may be added that its writers acted in great harmony, and nothing was published by any one which had not the approval of all. They held meetings regularly at stated times, chose a moderator, and determined controversial points by a majority of votes. If any member happened to be absent, he had to send, except in some particular cases, his papers for the approbation of his friends.§ The project was a great success. It rose superior to all the opposition of its opponents, Anabaptists, Quakers, Usurers, and Lacedemonians; and gained from the nation increasing, and almost general applause.||

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iii. p. 382.

† *Ibid.*, p. 76.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. iv. p. 76.

† *Ibid.*, p. 97.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 67-73.

CHAPTER VIII.

MORE LITERARY WORK—1692-1693.

THE publication of the *Athenian Gazette* was begun March 17, 1691, and was closed June 14, 1697. In itself, it was a formidable undertaking. The questions sent to the writers were so many, so diversified, so curious, and so difficult, that to answer them required immense reading and research. And yet, in the midst of the publication of this work, the Athenian Society courageously began another, even more extensive and more arduous; the proposals for printing which were issued, in the preface to the third volume of the *Athenian Gazette*, October 17, 1691. The work was to consist of 120 sheets; it was to contain nothing but what had the approbation of the *whole* Athenian Society; and the price per copy, unbound, was to be ten shillings. To some extent, it was similar in plan to the supplements attached to the first volumes of the *Athenian Gazette*: and probably this was the reason why the supplements were dropped a few months before the new work was issued. At length, on the 6th of June 1692, which was shortly after Samuel Wesley's removal to South Ormsby, the work was published in a folio volume of more than five hundred pages, and was entitled, "The Young Student's Library: containing Extracts and Abridgments of the most valuable Books, printed in England and in the Foreign Journals, from the Year Sixty-five to this time;"—to which is added, "A new Essay upon all sorts of Learning; wherein the Use of the Sciences is distinctly treated on, by the Athenian Society. London: Printed for John Dunton, 1692."

Prefixed to this volume is a curious and fantastic frontispiece, strikingly characteristic of Dunton's genius. At the four corners are representations of Athens, Rome, Oxford, and Cambridge. At a long table are seated the members of the Athenian Society,

twelve in number, Dunton evidently in the middle, and Samuel Wesley, the only clergyman, at his side. Before the table are all sorts of characters presenting their enigmas for solution. One is a faithless lady in a mask, come to inquire how she may convert her faithless husband to a sense of propriety. Another, as a fashionable coquette, with a spaniel in her lap, presents to the learned Athenians her square-sized billet, and awaits with self-complacent impudence an answer. A moon-struck lawyer and an honest Jack Tar eagerly ask for counsel; while a disciple of Euclid, compasses in hand, and studying a globe, longs for a mathematical solution. A poor parson inquires how he is to get a living; and a whole rout of fishwives, thieves, and bad characters clamour for advice; while, before a tripod, filled with burning chestnuts, is a monkey, with a cat in his paws, making her pick out the nuts on his behalf, and thereby showing the cautiousness of the Athenians in answering questions likely to burn their own fingers.

"The Young Student's Library" contains the substance of above one hundred volumes, many of them folio in size. The extracting and condensing of the contents of such a mass of books must have been a work of enormous labour. Very able synopses are given of above eighty different works.* And, in addition to these reviews, there are two most elaborate articles written by Samuel Wesley—one, entitled "An Essay upon all sorts of Learning," and the other, "A Discourse concerning the Antiquity, Divine Original, and Authority of the Points, Vowels, and Accents that are placed to the Hebrew Bible;" and, in close connexion with the latter, are six Critical Disquisitions upon the various editions of the Scriptures, the Polyglot Bible, Hebrew Grammars, Hebrew Lexicons, and Hebrew Poetry, all of which are probably the productions of Mr Wesley's pen.

From the foregoing summary, it will be seen that "The Young Student's Library" is a remarkable book, evincing an enormous extent of reading and research, and displaying an amount of labour almost incredible. Many of the volumes analysed are quarto and folio in size, and not a few are written in foreign languages. It is impossible to determine how many of these literary condensations were made by Mr Wesley; but there can be no doubt that he was one of the principal contributors to the work, inasmuch

* The titles of these works will be found in Appendix C.

as, from the first, he had been one of the chief members, if not *the chief* member, of the Athenian Society; and this opinion is strengthened by the fact, that his "Essay on Learning" is placed as a sort of preliminary discourse at the very commencement of the book; while his article on the "Hebrew Points" occupies an equally prominent position in what may be considered the second section of the volume.

The work was announced as "containing the substance and pith of all that is valuable in most of the best books printed in England and in the foreign journals;" whilst its object was "to provide means for improving the knowledge of those who had not the ability of purse to arrive at a learned education, and to purchase all those voluminous books which treat of those several arts and sciences which are required to the composing a scholar."* The preface of the book modestly, and not untruthfully, observes: "These treatises are not only pleasant as to their variety, but useful for their brevity; there being the substance and value of a considerable part of a good library brought within the compass of this volume; which as it will spare much labour—a man being able to peruse here more of an author in half an hour, than in half a day in the author himself—so it will save a great deal of expense to such as would be master of the knowledge of many books, the performances of the authors being here epitomised."

It has been already stated that, in this remarkable book, there are, besides epitomes of the works of others, two elaborate articles, the productions of Samuel Wesley's scholarship and pen; and these are of such interest and importance as to justify further remarks respecting them.

The "Discourse concerning the Antiquity, Divine Original, and Authority of the Points, Vowels, and Accents that are placed to the Hebrew Bible," if printed separately, would make an 8vo volume of nearly 250 pages. In the introduction, young students in divinity are strongly urged to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament; and, in order to this, they are earnestly advised to master the works of the Jewish Rabbins, because the Rabbins will help to a right understanding of many difficult Hebrew words and phrases, and will explain many rites and ceremonies, ordinances, and customs, which are but slightly mentioned in the sacred Scrip-

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iv. p. 56.

tures. From them will be obtained the best explanation of proverbial speeches, and of the names of places, sects, moneys, weights, and measures; and also of the moral, judicial, and ceremonial laws of Moses. A knowledge of the Rabbinical writings is also necessary to maintain and defend the purity, the points, vowels, and accents of the sacred text itself. After this, books are recommended as helpful in attaining an acquaintance with the Hebrew Bible—viz., Robertson's "First and Second Gate to the Holy Tongue;" Jessey's "Lexicon;" Buxtorf's "Epitome, Thesaurus, and Lexicon;" Bythner's "Lyra Prophetica;" Leusden's "Compendium;" and Arius Montanus's "Interlineary Bible." Wesley also recommends the study of the Mishna, the Talmud, and the Rabbinical Commentaries of Aben Ezra, and others. He likewise expresses a willingness to give to the public an English translation of these Rabbinical writings, if his bookseller received sufficient encouragement to publish; and, in another place, he says: "If this discourse about the original of the points, vowels, and accents, finds acceptance and encouragement, I intend a distinct discourse upon the sacred original text of the Old Testament, in defence of its purity and perfection, as it is now enjoyed by the Protestant Church; wherein I purpose to handle all those curiosities that are the subject of critical observation about the same; being very willing to defend our religion, and the rule of our faith, to the uttermost of my power."*

He then shows the vast importance of the points of the Hebrew Bible; contending that he who reads without the points is like one who rides a horse without a bridle, and knows not whither he goes. He also contends that his book is required and opportune, on account of such men as Capellus and Dr Walton having recently published the dangerous doctrine that the Hebrew points were not divine in their origin, but were added to the sacred text by the Masorites of Tiberias, about five hundred years before the birth of Christ. After this, he most elaborately refutes the opinions respecting the human and novel origin of the points, alleging that, with one exception, there is not a single Jewish writer, who makes the least mention of the Hebrew punctuation being invented by the Masorites, A.D. 500. He contends that the time and the place, when and where the points are said to have been invented, are exceedingly improbable; and that the Maso-

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

rites, to whom they are attributed, were unequal to the task, they being a set of magical and monstrous sots—a company of blind and crafty fools, bewitching and bewitched with traditions.

In the second part of his work, on the Hebrew points, Samuel Wesley proceeds to prove that the points are at least as old as Ezra, that they are of divine original, and therefore of divine authority. In confirmation of this, he appeals to the testimonies of Jews and Christians, and answers all sorts of objections.

It is almost impossible to give any adequate outline of this most learned production. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that there is no book of modern times in which so much learning is condensed into so small a space. It shows, incontestably, that Samuel Wesley was a most able Hebrew scholar, and, though at this time only thirty years of age, had gone through a course of learned reading to which but few scholars of the present age will apply themselves. Gildon, in his "History of the Athenian Society," remarks that Wesley "has taken notice of all which can be raised against the opinion he defends;" that he had "given himself for many years to the study of the Hebrew and original tongues, and to Rabbinical learning in general;" and that his "performance was quite equal to the nobleness of the subject." "He has executed his task," continues Gildon, "with a great deal of strength of judgment, force of argument, and profoundness of skill. It was the saying of a great man, that he would easily tell the progress any one would make in science if he knew but the value he had for it; and no man could have a greater esteem for any knowledge than this divine (Wesley) had for this." He considered it "the chief and obligatory study of men of his character, who were to give the true and genuine sense of Scripture to the souls they directed, under the pain of woe at the last tribunal. His treatise is accurate and elaborate, and abundantly satisfactory; and it were to be wished that the same great man would oblige the world with those other pieces of Rabbinical learning which he mentions in these sheets. No prospect of any present or future advantage to himself induced him to engage in this laborious work, he having generously given the copy to the publisher without the least gratuity. In him learning has met with a happy temper, an innate modesty, and a sweet agreeable affability to all men; a charity not stinted to factions, parties, or religions; but universal, like that of the first

institutor of our holy religion. In short, the virtues that this reverend divine has made a part of himself are much more noble qualifications than that extraordinary one of his learning." * Such a testimony, from a man contemporaneous with Samuel Wesley, is worth recording.

We only add respecting the "Discourse on the Hebrew Points," that, in the preface to the "Young Student's Library," it is stated "that the author of the Hebrew punctuation has retired into the country," (to South Ormsby,) "where his necessary business will take up a great part of his time; yet whatever letters and objections shall be sent to him about his performance he will, notwithstanding his business, set apart so much time as to maintain what he has advanced, and to answer all objections whatever."

Brave Samuel Wesley! None but an empty-headed braggart, or a great-minded man, conscious of his strength, would have dared to give a challenge such as this.

The second piece written by Mr Wesley, and published in the "Young Student's Library," is entitled "An Essay upon all Sorts of Learning." A few extracts will tend to show his intense passion for intellectual pursuits, and the wide range of his literary studies.

Learning.—"Learning is of universal extension. Like the sun, it denies not its rays to any that will open their eyes. Other treasures may be monopolised, but this is increased by diffusion, and the more a man imparts the more he retains. Rather than a wise man would be deprived of learning, he would even steal it from the minutes of necessary rest or recreation."

The Bible.—"If we examine nature, and anatomise the law written upon our hearts,—if we peruse the volumes of the ancient philosophers, or those of the Brahmins and Chinese,—if we make a strict inquiry into all their rules and lessons of morality,—we have a compendium of all in the sacred writ. For abstruseness of notions, the first of Genesis outvies the Egyptian philosophy; and for elegancy of style, the prophecy of Isaiah and the Epistle to the Hebrews far exceed the eloquent orations of Cicero and Demosthenes. In short, there is nothing here, either promised or threatened, commanded or forbidden, but what is godlike, and worthy its divine original. Our deists have nothing to object but a little buffoonery, and it would be a pity to deny them the

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iv. p. 60, 61.

happiness they take in that, or any other short-lived pleasure necessarily arising from their principles."

After a brief but pithy and powerful defence of revealed religion, he recommends to the biblical student a list of both English and Latin books that will greatly assist him in his studies, including the works of Poole, Hammond, Grotius, Eusebius, Hooker, Burnet, Stillingfleet, Lightfoot, Sherlock, Usher, Barrow, Du Pin, Hales, Jeremy Taylor, &c.

His next article is upon history, of which he writes:—

"*History* gives the best prospect into human affairs, and makes us familiar with the remotest regions. By this, we may ascertain what practices have established kingdoms, and what has contributed to the weakness and overthrow of bodies politic. We may see all Asia, Africa, and America in England. We may encompass the world with Drake, and make new discoveries with Columbus; we may visit the Grand Signior in the Seraglio, converse with Seneca, and consult with Cæsar. In a word, whatever humanity has done that is noble, great, and surprising, either by action or suffering, may by us be done over again in theory, and, if we have souls capable of transcribing the bravest copies, we may meet instances worth our emulation."

After the essays upon divinity and history there are others upon philosophy, law, physic, surgery, mathematics, and arithmetic, all of them brief, but very able; and, in connexion with each, a list of books which Samuel Wesley recommends to be read and studied. In these lists, Wesley displays his taste for the best literature then published, and also the immense extent of his own reading and research.

In his essay on *Poetry*, he says, "Poetry was the first philosophy the world was blest with, and had that influence on the minds of men, then fallen from their primitive reason into the wildest barbarity, that it soon brought them to civility, and to know the dictates of reason from those of fancy."

He then advises "candidates for the laurel" to "consider the difficulty of being a good poet." "Mediocrity is intolerable in poetry, however excusable in other affairs." "A young poet should never be ambitious of writing much, for a little gold is worth a great heap of lead." "To be a perfect poet, a man must be a general scholar, skilled both in the tongues and sciences, and must be perfect in history and moral philosophy."

Such was Samuel Wesley's estimate of the qualifications of a perfect poet. Perhaps it would have been better if he himself had observed some of his own rules more strictly than what he did. Dunton says: "Mr Wesley had an early inclination to poetry, but he usually wrote too fast to write well. Two hundred couplets a day are too many by two-thirds to be well furnished with all the beauties and graces of that art." *

In Mr Wesley's article on "Dialling," there is the following beautiful sentence: "Time is the greatest treasure in this world that a mortal can be intrusted with. We are not only probationers for eternity by the help of time, but even the little interests of this world are managed by the means of it. To divide time by dials, clocks, and watches, is a faint imitation of God Almighty, who has divided the year into spring, summer, autumn, and winter, and even our life into days and nights."

Of *Geometry* he writes: "All our most necessary as well as most noble arts and sciences depend on it. None of the mechanical arts can ever be brought to perfection without it; and if painters were ignorant of proportion, angles, circles, and squares, all their works would want beauty, and themselves would want satisfaction. A joiner cannot so much as cut a round table unless he understands a circle; nor a carpenter square a piece of timber unless he know, by the rule of square figures, when his work is finished. The watch and clock makers would be at a loss, if it were not for this science; and no builder could regularly design a fabric without a knowledge of geometrical problems. Navigation and gunnery can never be understood without geometry; and to these I may add, fortification, dialling, music, astronomy, and surveying. It would be needless to say any more of the advantages of geometry, here being enough to fire the mind of any ingenious student to a diligent inquiry into it."

Writing on *Optics*, he says: "'Tis pleasant to undeceive the eye in the common accidents of life, and to see it approach, in some measure, towards that certainty of judging and apprehending *visibles* that it will attain to at the day of resurrection, when it will be above the power of being cheated by concave or convex, or deluded by a refraction or reflection. This may, in a great measure, be accomplished in this world by such as give themselves up to the study of optics."

* Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

There are other articles on painting, astronomy, and navigation, and glances at geography, music, architecture, grammar, and rhetoric. The general "Essay on all Sorts of Learning" concludes thus: "Whoever makes a trial of the worth of learning will find that all encomiums come far short of the thing itself; and that those only can best reflect upon its value who are sensible of the enjoyment of it."

Such, then, is a general outline of the contents of "The Young Student's Library," published in 1692; but no one can form an adequate idea of the work without seeing it. None but immense readers and careful writers like Samuel Wesley and his Athenian friends could have put such a book together.

It was the intention of the Athenian Society to have followed up the publication of the "Young Student's Library" with another work—"A New System of Experimental Philosophy upon the Four Elements"—and embracing a description of strange appearances, noises, strange winds, subterranean steams, waters, their properties and inhabitants, earths of all sorts, plants and trees, husbandry, animals, insects, birds, reptiles, fishes, extraordinary buildings and extraordinary persons, antiquities, &c.;* but I am not aware that this was ever issued.

Contemporaneously with the publication of the "Young Student's Library," Mr Wesley was employed upon another work, which has never yet been noticed by any Wesleyan biographer. In vol. vi. of the *Athenian Gazette*, it is announced that the Athenian Society have bought the right to a "Monthly Journal of Books," and that this journal will now be carried on by a "London Divine," under the title of "The Complete Library; or, News for the Ingenious;" and that it will be issued monthly, beginning with the month of May 1692.

The work was published accordingly. We have seen and examined three of the volumes, containing between four and five hundred pages each, and extending from May 1692 to March 1694. The numbers are divided into three sections: 1. Original pieces; 2. An account of the choicest books printed in England and on the Continent of Europe; 3. Notes on current events.

The first article is entitled, "A Discourse concerning the Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew Bible; by the Author of a Discourse concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Points, Vowels,

* *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iv. p. 65.

and Accents,"—thus plainly intimating that the "London Divine," who had the management of the work, was none other than Samuel Wesley. Besides, no one acquainted with Mr Wesley's mode of thinking and style of writing, can have any hesitation in pronouncing him the author.

He maintains that all religion stands or falls as we can defend and prove the integrity of the Hebrew copy of the Bible; and his principal object is to refute the opinions of Capellus, the leader of all those who say the Hebrew Bible has been corrupted. The article is learned and able, and fills twenty-four small quarto pages.

In succeeding numbers there are kindred articles, evidently by the same practised pen. One is on "Scripture Chronology;" another is, "A Critical Inquiry into the Number, Names, Division, and Order of the Books of the Old Testament;" another is, "The Ancient Manner of Reading, Writing, and Preserving the Law of Moses, as an evidence of the unparalleled care taken in former times to preserve the Bible in its purity and perfection;" another is, "A Scriptural Account of the Nature, Original, and Divine Authority of the Bible, as it is Canonical, in opposition to the Apocrypha, and all other books of human composition or oral tradition;" and another is, "On the Evidences of the Divine Original of the Scriptures; on the Ways and Means of understanding the Scriptures; and on the Necessity and Excellency of their use and Study."

The three volumes contain reviews of nearly two hundred books and other publications; the first of which is a review of "The Life of the Rev. Thomas Brand; and his Funeral Sermon, by Dr Annesley." It is scarce likely that the whole of these reviews were written by Mr Wesley; but it is more than probable that he was the reviewer of this work of his wife's father. He thinks that "Dissenters and Churchmen will soon be better friends; and though they may not be able to unite so perfectly as to come under one form of discipline, yet they may give one another the right hand of fellowship, and be without any other heat than that of holy emulation, which shall excel in practical godliness, and in the lively exercises of those graces that shall be most beneficial to mankind, and of most edification to the Church of Christ."

The frontispiece of each monthly number is curious: in one corner, is a clergyman in gown and bands and a broad-brimmed hat; in another, a scholar writing at a desk; and between the two,

a hive of bees, surrounded by plants and flowers ; while above and below are three mottoes, viz., "*Sic nos non nobis mellificamus apes ;*" "*Omnia in libris ;*" and,

"All plants yield honey, as you see,
To the industrious chymic bee."

It is only fair to add, that on the title-page of vol. ii., the "Complete Library" is said to be "by R. W.," Master of Arts, but there can be little doubt that the "R" is a misprint.

During Mr Wesley's retired residence at South Ormsby, he was engaged in other literary undertakings. In 1693, the year after the publication of the "Young Student's Library," he printed a new work, entitled, "The Life of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: An Heroic Poem. Dedicated to her most sacred Majesty ; in Ten Books. Attempted by Samuel Wesley, Rector of South Ormsby, in the county of Lincoln. Each book illustrated by necessary notes, explaining all the more difficult matters in the whole history. Also a Prefatory Discourse concerning Heroic Poetry ; with sixty copperplates. London: Printed for Charles Harper, at the Flower-de-Luce, over against St Dunstan's Church, in Fleet Street; and Benjamin Motte, in Aldersgate Street. 1693."

The volume is folio in size, contains 349 pages, and is divided into ten books, consisting of nearly 9000 lines. The preface, which fills fourteen closely-printed pages, is an elaborate production, and well written. At the close of it, Wesley says he knows the faults of his book, and would have mended much that is amiss if he had lived in an age when a man might afford to spend nine or ten years about a poem.

Prefixed to the work are a number of commendatory verses by Nahum Tate, poet-laureate, and by others. Tate praises the book and its author to the utmost stretch of poetical eulogium. He regards Samuel Wesley as one who has completed the task which Milton left unfinished ; and represents him as a great bard emerging from solitude, fired with rapture, and charmingly unfolding the great themes of angelic hymns, and weaving wit and piety together. His spotless muse brings fresh laurels from Parnassus, and plants them on Mount Zion.

L. Milbourne and Peter Anthony Motteaux are equally lavish of their praises ; and both of these writers were men of mark. It is true that Pope gives Milbourne a niche in his "Dunciad ;" but Dunton, who knew him well, observes concerning him,

"Most other perfections are so far from matching his, that they deserve not to be mentioned; his translations are fine and true; his preaching sublime and rational; and he is a first-rate poet." Motteaux was a native of France, and was driven to England by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. At first, he kept a large East India warehouse in Leadenhall Street. He was master of several languages, and, during his residence in England, he acquired so perfect a knowledge of the English tongue, that he became a very eminent dramatic writer in a language to which he was not a native. On his birthday, in 1717, he was found dead in a disorderly house in London, not without suspicion of having been murdered.

In opposition to such eulogists, it is only fair to state, that Danton describes Wesley's "Life of Christ" as "intolerably dull;" and it has been asserted, that Alexander Pope had so mean an opinion of its merits, that, in one of the early editions of his "Dunciad," he honoured Wesley with a place in the Temple of Dulness.* The work was also fiercely assailed by Samuel Palmer, (to be noticed hereafter,) to whom Wesley replied,† "I know my poem is very faulty; but whether it be in itself so absolutely contemptible as Mr Palmer represents it, I desire may be left to more impartial judges. If he will be so kind as to let me know the particular faults of that poem, I shall own myself highly obliged to him, and will take care to correct them. I am sensible there

* The edition of the "Dunciad" in which Wesley appeared was a surreptitious one. The following were the lines printed:—

"How all the suffering brotherhood retire,
And 'scape the martyrdom of jakes and fire;
A Gothic library of Greece and Rome,
Well purged; and worthy Wesley, Watts, and Brome."

The author of "The Life and Times of Dr Isaac Watts" affirms that Watts re-monstrated with Pope, and, in consequence, his name was deprived of the undesirable distinction. He also adds, that "the elder Wesley's name was probably omitted owing to the interposition of his son Samuel, who corresponded with Pope, and was highly esteemed by him," (Watts' *Life*, p. 436.) There may be some truth in this. In an edition of the "Dunciad" now lying before us, and published in 1729, the last line is printed—

"Well purged, and worthy Withers, Quarles, and Blome."

And to this is appended the following note:—"It was printed in the surreptitious editions, 'W—ly, W—s,' who were persons eminent for good life; the one writ the 'Life of Christ' in verse; the other some valuable pieces in the lyric kind on pious subjects. The line is here restored according to its original."

† Wesley's *Defence of his Letter on Education of Dissenters*.

are too many incorrect lines in it, which had better been left out ; but I remember, too, some lines struck out which, perhaps, had been as well left in. I care not if I oblige him with two or three of them, which were in the original but were not printed, and leave him to guess the reason—

“ Or murmuring deep with harsh incondite tone,
With eyes reversed, and many a brutal groan,
We are the favour'd few, the elect alone.”

Badcock, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1784, tells us that Wesley's “heroic poem, the ‘Life of Christ,’ excited the ridicule of the wits.” John Wesley, in his reply to this, in the same periodical for 1785, p. 246, simply states, that his father's own account of it was, “The cuts are good ; the notes pretty good ; the verses so-so.” Samuel Wesley, jun., ardently loved his father, and admired his genius, but speaks of his “Life of Christ” in the following measured terms :—

“ Whate'er his strains, still glorious was his end :
Faith to assert, and virtue to defend.
He sung how God his Saviour deigned to expire,
With Vida's piety, though not his fire.”

John Wesley, who, though he seldom wrote poetry, had as fine poetic taste as any member of his family, observes : “In my father's poem on the ‘Life of Christ’ there are many excellent lines, but they must be taken in connexion with the rest. It would not be at all proper to print them separate.”*

Dr Adam Clarke, in reference to the same production, writes : “When a poet, no matter of what abilities, takes for the subject of his verse the sayings or acts of the Almighty, as recorded in the Bible, he must of necessity fail, speak untruths, and sink below himself. Who can add to the dignity, importance, or majesty of the words of God by any poetical clothing ? The attempt to do it is almost impious ; and, in the execution, how many words are attributed to God which He never spake, and acts which He never did ! The life of our Lord was never found, and never will be found, but in the four evangelists.”†

Dr Coke, who published a “corrected and abridged” edition of Samuel Wesley's “Life of Christ” more than a hundred years after the first edition was issued, says in his preface :—“I found the poet had carefully collected the richest materials, with a sedulity

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

† *Ibid.*

that surpassed my expectation, and had arranged them with a degree of art that nothing but the hand of a master could have reached. In surveying the character of Christ as here delineated, no remarkable incident in His life, from the cradle to His cross, has been omitted; nay, if we even take a wider range, every event of moment is noted, from the espousals of His mother to His resurrection from the dead, and His final ascension to glory. Indeed, the life of Christ, being closely connected with both time and eternity, presented to the poet an occasion to draw aside the curtain which divides the visible from the invisible world. Both heaven and hell are permitted to burst upon us; the former to ravish us with its glories, and the latter to alarm us with its terrors. Hence angels and devils pass in review before our eyes; relate what is past, discover their condition, perform their respective actions, and retire."

Wesley's poem is far from perfect. In many places it flashes with the highest kind of genius, and throughout it breathes with piety. The reader will find hundreds of lines full of poetic beauty; but then he will find others that are extremely tame, and literally limp for want of poetic feet. There can be no doubt that Samuel Wesley wrote too much for his writings to be faultless. "He wrote *very much* for me," says Dunton, "both in verse and prose." How much he wrote no one living has the means of knowing. Dunton says, "he wrote two hundred couplets a day." He might do that when composing pieces for the *Athenian Gazette*, but it is incredible to think that this was done when he was composing "The Life of Christ;" for, in that case, the whole of that large folio poem would have been begun and finished in about three weeks.

The "Life of Christ" was first published in 1693. With all its faults, the edition was soon sold; and in 1697 the author issued a "revised and improved" edition, with "a large map of the Holy Land, and a table of the principal contents."

The plates used in this second edition are said to have been engraved "by the celebrated hand of William Fairthorn;" but if so, they must have been engraved long before the first edition was published, inasmuch as Fairthorn died as early as 1691. Fairthorn was an ingenious artist; but lived a chequered life. As a royalist, he was taken prisoner at the breaking out of the civil wars, and for a length of time was confined in Aldersgate. His

place of business was near Temple Bar, where he sold not only his own engravings, but those of other English artists, and imported a considerable number of prints from Holland, France, and Italy. About 1680 he left his shop, and went to reside in Printing House Yard, where he continued to work for booksellers, until a lingering consumption put an end to his life in 1691. Such was Samuel Wesley's engraver.

From the preface of the book, we learn that the poem was begun in Anglesea and the Isle of Man, and afterwards "completed in several parts of England." Wesley says the subject was first proposed to him by certain of his friends, and that he greedily embraced it; though, at the time, he knew nothing of the rules propounded by the masters of epic poetry. In reference to his object in publishing the book, he writes, "I desire to recommend the whole of the Christian religion; all the articles of faith; all that system of theology and morality contained in the gospel of the blessed Jesus; and to vindicate His mission, His satisfaction, and His divinity, against all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics."

Perhaps enough has been said respecting this folio "Life of Christ." Let the curious reader, when he has the chance, purchase it for himself. The sentiments and the spirit of the book cannot fail to be of service to every one who gives it a fair perusal; whilst many of its lines will be found to be ponderous with thought, and full of genius. As a proof of this, we conclude the chapter with four quotations. The first is Wesley's description of the glorious scene witnessed on Mount Tabor, and is, in fact, the first piece of the poem:—

"To Tabor's mount He beckon'd from the sky,
Two glorious saints who reign'd enthroned on high;
Moses, the leader of God's chosen band,
Who nature's laws inverted with his wand;
With him Elijah, who sublimely rode
A car of lightning to the throne of God;
Thus Law and Prophets their perfection find
In Him, the hope, the price of lost mankind;
Thus Christ, and Moses, and Elias came,
Their persons different, but their views the same.
Unrival'd beauties deck'd the Saviour's face,
His dazzling form the circling glories grace;
His seamless coat, than falling snows more white,
Enclosed a pillar of transparent light.
The two great prophets, who beside Him stood,
Array'd in light their modest glories show'd.

Thus stars appear, when, twinkling, they display
 Their feeble lustre to the orb of day;
 Yet Moses, who from trembling Sinai came,
 Appear'd encircled in a robe of flame;
 While great Elijah, half-conceal'd from sight,
 Shone with strange lustre through a cloud of light.
 Transports of joy fill'd each disciple's breast,
 Too big for utterance, or to be repress'd;
 Around their heads celestial clouds arise,
 Which rather brighten than conceal the skies;
 Compared with day they seem'd divinely fair,
 And scatter'd odours through the balmy air;
 Form'd of materials most serenely bright,
 They shone a tissue of unsullied light.
 The three apostles, as the clouds prevail,
 Felt all their spirits and their muscles fail;
 Their loins relax, their knees no strength impart,
 And fear and trembling seize on every heart.
 Low on the earth, dissolved in reverent fear,
 They heard a voice, which none but they must hear;
 The voice of God; no more in frowns express'd,
 With lightnings written, or in thunder dress'd,
 Such as at Sinai issued forth the Law,
 And, with dread earthquakes, rock'd the plains below;
 But all melodious, tranquil, and serene,
 Which charm'd like music this delightful scene;
 In words like these the will of God was given,
 In attestation of the King of heaven:
 'I thus declare Thee my beloved Son,
 Whom all my servants shall both hear and own.'

The following lines on the Deity are what no one but a philosopher and a poet could have written:—

"Before this beauteous world was made,
 Before the earth's foundations laid,
 He was, He ever is, we know not how!
 No mean succession His duration knows,
 That spring of being neither ebbs nor flows:
 Whatever was, was God, ere time or place;
 Endless duration He, and boundless space,
 Fill'd with Himself, wherever thought can pierce,
 He fill'd, Himself alone, the universe."

The next extract refers to the personality and divinity of our Saviour:—

"The Father's image He, as great, as bright,
 Clothed in the same insufferable light;
 More closely join'd, more intimately one
 With His great Father, than the light and sun.
 Equal in goodness and in might,
 True God of God, and light of light;

Him, with the Father, we adore :
There is no after, or before."

The following is part of Wesley's description of the last judgment :—

" The awful trumps of God ! a call they sound,
Rolling through nature's universal round ;
That signal heard from the dissolving sky,
Decrepit nature lays her down to die :
Not so man's deathless race, who now revive,
And must in joy or pain for ever live !
Vast heaps on heaps, thick orbs on orbs are hurl'd,
Chaos on chaos, world confused in world ;
Huge spheres, so fast each after other roll'd,
E'en boundless space their ruins scarce will hold."

With all due deference to eccentric John Dunton, we submit that such lines are far from being "intolerably dull." They were too hastily written to have the polished rotundity of poets like Young and Pope ; but, notwithstanding this, they are full of poetic fire. The reader, who is in search of poetic *thoughts* rather than poetic *sounds*, will find himself amply recompensed by a careful reading of Wesley's "Life of Christ." We can hardly praise the poem so highly as it is praised by Nahum Tate ; but, at the same, we maintain that, for learning, energy of thought, vivid imagination, picturesque phrases, and forceful language in general, it is immeasurably superior to scores of other poems, which, by accident, have been vastly more popular than it has been. Men brand Samuel Wesley's poetry without reading it. This is, in the highest degree, unfair. In the name of a great and much injured man, we protest against it ; and respectfully request that, for the sake of his memory, and their own benefit, they would give his poems a careful and candid perusal.

In the second volume of the *Athenian Oracle*, p. 37, the question is asked, What books of poetry would you advise one that is young to read ? In the answer, after recommending David's Psalms, and the poems of Cowley, Herbert, Chaucer, Milton, Spenser, Tasso, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, Dr Donne, and Dryden, it is quietly but significantly added, "and, if you have patience, Wesley's Life of Christ." Reader, the advice is worth taking, though it was probably given by Wesley himself.

CHAPTER IX.

WILLIAM AND MARY'S REIGN—1689-1702.

WILLIAM AND MARY were declared King and Queen of England on the 12th of February 1689. Their reign is marked by great events—such as the siege of Londonderry, Lord Dundee's insurrection in Scotland, the battle of the Boyne, the surrender of Limerick, the massacre of Glencoe, and the war with France ; but we purposely pass over all civil and military transactions, and confine our attention to ecclesiastical and literary affairs, with which Samuel Wesley, as a clergyman and as an author, was more closely connected.

One of the first acts of William, after his accession to the throne, was to give orders that, in his private chapel, the service should be said instead of sung. This alteration was warranted by the rubric, and yet it caused among the High Church and half-popish party a great amount of murmuring.

Another of his early acts strangely enough occasioned much excitement. Touching for the scrofula was a practice which had come down from the darkest of the dark ages, and William dared to sneer at it. It had been sanctioned by high ecclesiastical authority, but even that did not deter the bold monarch from treating it with contempt. Charles II., in the course of his reign, touched near one hundred thousand persons. In 1682, only seven years before the commencement of the reign of William, he performed the royal rite not fewer than eight thousand five hundred times. Two years later, in 1684, the throng of scrofulous persons was such that six or seven of the sick were trampled to death. King James, two or three years after, touched eight hundred persons, in the choir of Chester Cathedral. The days for touching were fixed by the Privy Council, and were solemnly notified by the clergy in all the parish churches of the realm. When the appointed time came, several divines, in full canonicals, stood round the canopy of state, the surgeon of the royal household introduced

the sick, a passage from 16th chapter of Mark was read, after which one of the sick was brought to the all-healing monarch. His Majesty stroked the ulcers and swellings, and hung round the patient's neck a white riband, to which was fastened a gold coin. The other sufferers were then led up in succession, and as each was touched the chaplain repeated the incantation, "They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Then came the epistle, prayers, antiphonies, and a benediction. Such was the ceremony of touching for the cure of the king's evil. The expense of this ceremony, in the shape of coins put round the sufferers' necks, was little less than £10,000 a-year. The whole affair was a huge piece of costly and superstitious foolery, ending in no beneficial results whatever. We dare to assert this, notwithstanding the solemn assurance of one of the surgeons of King Charles II., that the gift of healing was communicated by the unction administered at the coronation, and that the cures were so numerous, and sometimes so rapid, that they could not be attributed to any natural cause whatever.

King William had too much sense to be duped, and too much honesty to bear a part in what he knew to be an imposture.* "It is a silly superstition," said he, when he heard that, at the close of Lent, his palace was besieged by a crowd of sick persons: "give the poor creatures some money and send them away." Only on one single occasion was he successfully importuned to lay his hand on a patient's sores. "God give you better health," he said, "and more sense!" What was the result of this abandonment of royal practice? The parents of scrofulous children cried out against William's cruelty. Bigots lifted up their hands and eyes at his impiety. Jacobites sarcastically praised him for not presuming to arrogate to himself a power which belonged only to legitimate sovereigns. And even some of his own friends thought he acted unwisely in treating with such marked contempt a superstition which had so strong a hold on the vulgar mind. But William was not to be moved, and was accordingly set down by many High Churchmen as an infidel, or at least a Puritan.

As soon as William and Mary ascended the throne of England the new oath of allegiance was tendered. It was conceived in the simplest form, the words "rightful and lawful sovereigns" being

* William tried to put down the practice, and yet, as late as Lent, in 1712, Dr Johnson was "touched" by Queen Anne.

upon mature deliberation, omitted. Notwithstanding this modification, several members, both of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, refused to take it. Among these were the Earls of Clarendon, Lichfield, and Exeter, and likewise seven bishops, including five who had been sent to the Tower for refusing obedience to the mandates of James. The spiritual lords who refused the oath of allegiance to William and Mary were Sancroft, the primate, Turner, Bishop of Ely, Lake, of Chichester, Ken, of Bath, White, of Peterborough, Thomas, of Worcester, and Framp-ton, of Gloucester. Above four hundred of the clergy, including some of the highest distinction, followed the example set by Sancroft and the six bishops, and thus began the schism of the *Non-jurors*,—a term which became as prominent as that of *Nonconformists* had been under the last two Stuarts.

The 1st of August, 1689, was the day fixed by Parliament, before the close of which all beneficed clergymen, and all persons holding academical offices must, on pain of suspension, swear allegiance to William and Mary. Above twenty-nine-thirtieths submitted to the law, but, in general, the compliance was tardy, and, and sullen. Many, no doubt, deliberately sacrificed principle to interest, but they had not fortitude to resign the parsonage, the garden, and the glebe, and to go forth without knowing where to find a meal, or a roof for themselves and their little ones. Many swore with doubts and misgivings; still the thing was done, and ten thousand clergymen solemnly called Heaven to attest their promise that they would be loyal to King William. The clergymen and members of the university, who refused to take the oath, were about four hundred in number, including the primate and six of his suffragans.

Among these dissentients, there were some who were men of scholarship and mark, but perhaps it is scarce too much to say, that there was hardly one who was qualified to discuss any large question of morals or politics without either extreme feebleness or extreme flightiness of mind. The following are the most distinguished among them :—

William Sherlock, rector of St George's, Botolph Lane, prebendary of St Paul's, and Master of the Temple; all of which preferments were taken from him until some years afterwards, when he took the oath and was reinstated. Dr Sherlock was a good man, but held extreme opinions. He was the author of several

publications, but is chiefly indebted for celebrity to his "Practical Discourse Concerning Death," a work which went through thirty editions in a short space of time, has been printed in all sizes and forms, and has been applauded by the most able critics.

George Hickes, born at Newsham, in Yorkshire, and educated at Northallerton, a fellow and a tutor of Lincoln College, Oxford, Dean of Worcester, with the prospect of becoming Bishop of Bristol. He was the author of three volumes of sermons, and of a multitude of tracts in defence of himself and of the other non-jurors. Macaulay says, "Of all the Englishmen of his time George Hickes was the most versed in the old Teutonic languages, and his knowledge of the early Christian literature also was extensive."

Jeremy Collier, lecturer at Gray's Inn, a man of intrepid courage, indefatigable industry, and unsullied integrity; the author of three volumes of essays on moral subjects; of a translation of Moreri's "Historical Dictionary," in four volumes folio; of an "Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain," &c. Macaulay writes:—"Jeremy Collier was a good man, of eminent abilities, and a great master of sarcasm and of rhetoric. To his eloquence and courage is to be chiefly ascribed the purification of our lighter literature from that foul taint which had been contracted during the Anti-puritan reaction. His reading, too, though undigested, was of immense extent: but his mind was narrow, his reasoning singularly futile and inconclusive, and his brain almost turned by priestly pride."

Henry Dodwell, Camden Professor of History in the Oxford University, a man of great learning, of extensive reading, and of unwearied application, of undissembled piety, and unimpeached integrity; a man of great benevolence, and who religiously abstained from almost all kinds of food three days every week; and yet a man of paradoxical notions, narrow religious sentiments, and who, as a writer, enlisted in the cause of infidelity, and attacked revelation in the disguise of a friend. The brilliant historian above quoted says:—"Dodwell had perused innumerable volumes in various languages, and acquired more learning than his slender faculties were able to bear. The small intellectual spark which he possessed was put out by the fuel. Some of his books seem to have been written in a madhouse; and, though filled with proofs of his immense reading, degrade him to the level of Ludowich Muggleton. He published a treatise in which he maintained that

a marriage between a member of the Church of England and a Dissenter was a nullity, and that the couple were in the sight of Heaven guilty of adultery. He defended the use of instrumental music in public worship, on the ground that the notes of the organ had a power to counteract the influence of devils on the spinal marrow of human beings. He further maintained that our souls are naturally mortal, and that the gift of immortality is conveyed in the sacrament of baptism; but, in order to the efficacy of the sacrament, it is absolutely necessary that the water be poured, and the words be pronounced by a priest who has been ordained by a bishop."

John Kettlewell, born at Northallerton, fellow and tutor of Lincoln College, Oxford, domestic chaplain of the Countess of Bedford, and rector of Coleshill in Warwickshire; a celebrated preacher, a laborious writer; learned without being proud, and wise without being cunning; devout without affectation, religious without morosity, and courteous without flattery. His works, which were numerous, were published in two volumes folio.

Charles Leslie, chancellor of the cathedral church of the diocese of Connor, one of the ablest champions the Non-jurors had; a man of extensive learning and great merit, and the well-known author of "*A Short and Easy Method with the Deists*."

To the above, of course, must be added the primate and the six bishops. Dr Birch, in drawing Sancroft's character, says:—"He was slow, timorous, and narrow-spirited; but at the same time a good, honest, and well-meaning man. He was laborious in his studies, and had written, perhaps, more with his own hand than any person of his time. But the three sermons which he published give us a very low idea of his taste and judgment, and are more suitable to a disciple of Bishop Andrews than a contemporary of Dr Tillotson." Turner, Bishop of Ely, was a man of higher position than of intellect. Lake, Bishop of Chichester, is also unknown to fame. Ken, Bishop of Bath, in some respects was a man of mark; his works, all of a theological and practical turn, were published in four volumes octavo. He was a man of great integrity and courage; and, though deprived of his bishopric, to the day of his death signed himself "late Bishop of Bath and Wells." He died in 1710, having been in the habit for many years of travelling with his shroud in his portmanteau, and which he always put on when attacked by illness. White of Peter-

borough is scarce worth mentioning. Thomas of Worcester died during the first year of William and Mary's reign; and of Frampton of Gloucester we know nothing which is worth relating.

These, then, were the principal men among the Non-jurors; and these, with four hundred clergymen, forfeited their ecclesiastical benefices, and formed a sort of *non-juring* church, avowedly Jacobite in its political predilections and principles, and, which for many years, waged a fierce controversy with the Establishment on the theological aspects of the question which divided them. The non-juring system had a few lay-adherents, but it extended beyond the clergy only to a very limited extent. The new sect was a sect of preachers without hearers. A few had independent means. Some lived by literature; one or two practised physic. Thomas Wagstaffe, for example, who had been chancellor of Lichfield, had many patients, and made himself conspicuous among them by always visiting them in full canonicals. But these were exceptions. Most of the Non-jurors found themselves thrown on the world with nothing to eat and nothing to do. They naturally degenerated into beggars and loungers, and many of them became domesticated as chaplains, tutors, and spiritual directors in the houses of opulent Jacobites.* The schism of the Non-jurors, however, led to great changes among the occupants of Church offices; and, before the end of the third year of King William's reign, he had issued no fewer than eighteen *conges* for the election of new bishops. During this brief period, sixteen new prelates, all indebted for their promotion to the existing government, and recommended by their attachment to the principles of the Revolution, were introduced into the House of Lords; and of the whole twenty-six sees then existing, only ten were left in the possession of persons who had been bishops in the reign of James.†

On the 24th of May 1689, the *Act of Toleration* became law. This act, long considered as the Great Charter of religious liberty, has since been extensively modified, and is hardly known to the present generation except by name. The several statutes passed between the accession of Queen Elizabeth and the Revolution, requiring all people, under severe penalties, to attend the services of the Church of England, and to abstain from attending conventicles, were left unrepealed; but provision was made that they should not be construed to extend to any person, who should

* Macaulay.

† Knight's *History of England*.

testify his loyalty by taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and his protestantism, by subscribing the declaration against transubstantiation. The severe Act of Uniformity, the Five Mile Act, and the Conventicle Act were not repealed, but merely relaxed; it being provided that dissenting ministers might preach, if they professed, under their hand, their belief in the Articles of the Church of England, with a few exceptions, such as, that the Church has power to regulate ceremonies, that the doctrines in the Book of Homilies are sound, and that there is nothing superstitious and idolatrous in the ordination service. But unless the minister subscribed thirty-four out of the thirty-nine Articles, and the greater part of two other Articles, he could not preach without incurring all the punishments which the cavaliers, in the day of their power and vengeance, had devised for the tormenting and ruining of schismatical teachers. Such were the terms on which the Protestant Dissenters of England were, for the first time, permitted by law to worship God according to their own consciences. They were, on the above conditions, allowed to attend their own places of worship, provided they were duly registered, and had not the doors locked or barred. They were protected against hostile intrusion, and it was made a penal offence to enter a meeting-house for the purpose of molesting a congregation. The only classes of religionists excepted from the benefits of this act were the Papists and Socinians.*

Many of the Dissenters were still dissatisfied, and wished other matters of grievance to be settled in parliament. Accordingly, what was called the "Comprehension Bill" was brought into the House of Lords. The chief object of this bill was to admit Presbyterian ministers into the Church, without compelling them to acknowledge the invalidity of their former ordination; and it also proposed to allow certain ceremonial forms in public worship to be observed or omitted at discretion.

This bill passed the House of Lords; but the Commons considered the question as more suitable for a convocation; and the Lords concurred in an address to the throne to that effect.

To prepare the way for convocation a royal commission was issued, authorising certain individuals to meet and propose alterations in the Liturgy and Canons, and to consider other matters connected with the Church. The commissioners thus appointed

* Knight's *History of England*, and Macaulay's *History*.

were Lamplugh, Compton, Mew, Lloyd, Sprat, Smith, Trelawney, Burnet, Humphreys, Stratford, all bishops at the time; also Stillingfleet, Patrick, Tillotson, Sharp, Hall, Beveridge, Tennison, Fowler, Grove, and Williams, who were subsequently raised to the Episcopal bench; and likewise Meggot, Kidder, Aldridge, Jane, Beaumont, Montague, Goodman, Battely, Alston, and Scott, who, though distinguished men, never attained to prelatical honours.

The commissioners frequently met, but some of the members absented themselves, especially Dr Jane, the Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford, on the ground that alterations were not required, and that the present was not the season for such discussions. Burnet says, "We had before us all the books and papers that the Nonconformists had at any time offered, setting forth their demands, together with many advices and propositions which had been made at several times by most of the best and most learned of our divines; and so we prepared a scheme to be laid before convocation."

The following are some of the alterations that were proposed:— Chanting to be discontinued. Apochryphal lessons to be left out of the calendar. The sign of the cross in baptism to be omitted when desired. The sacramental elements to be administered in pews to those who might object to kneeling. The absolution to be read by deacons. The *Gloria Patri* not to be repeated at the end of every psalm. In the *Te Deum* the words only-begotten Son to be substituted for *thine honourable, true, and only Son*. All titles of the king and queen to be omitted, and the word "sovereign" only used. The Collects to be revised by Patrick. Sponsors to be disused if desired. The great festivals, as a rule, to be retained; but it was not thought desirable that St Valentine, St Chad, St Swithin, St Dunstan, and St Alphage, should share the honours of St John and St Paul. The Athanasian creed to be kept in the Prayer-Book, but Stillingfleet was to draw up a rubric, declaring that the damnatory clauses were to be understood to apply only to such as obstinately denied the substance of the Christian faith. The point of greatest difficulty was that of *re-ordination*; but it was at last agreed that the hypothetical *form* should be adopted in the case of Dissenters, as in the case of uncertain baptism, in these words "*If thou art not already ordained, I ordain thee.*" Such were some of the alterations proposed by the commissioners.*

* See Lathbury's *History of Convocation*.

It mattered little, however, whether the recommendations of the commissioners were good or bad. They were all doomed before they were published; for the clergy were all smarting from being recently compelled to take the oaths, and were resolved to defeat a favourite scheme of that government which had exacted from them, under severe penalties, a submission not easily to be reconciled to their conscience or their pride.

The convocation, it may be observed, though regularly assembled with every parliament since the Restoration, had done no business since the year 1662; so that the members were detained in town, at considerable expense, during the session, merely to go through the parade of reading the church service in Latin; but now it was proposed to submit to their consideration most important changes.

The convocation, summoned by the writ of King William, assembled on the 21st of November 1689. Compton was in the chair. Beveridge preached a Latin sermon, in which he warmly eulogised the existing system, and yet declared himself favourable to a moderate reform. The struggle between the advocates for change and those who wished to preserve the Liturgy in its present state commenced at the very outset, in the election of a prolocutor. Tillotson, who was known to speak the sense both of the king and queen, and was also supported by the government, was proposed by Dr Sharp, afterwards Archbishop of York; but the election of Dr Jane was carried by a majority of two to one. Jane, of course, belonged to the High-Church party. He had borne a chief part in framing that decree by which the University of Oxford ordered the works of Milton to be publicly burned in the schools; and yet the same man had repaired to the headquarters of the Prince of Orange, and had assured his Highness that Oxford would willingly coin her plate for the support of the war against her oppressor. For a short time Jane had been regarded as a Whig, now he was a Tory. He had demanded the see of Exeter as a reward due to his services, but had been refused; and hence his changed sentiments. At the time several epigrams were written on the double-faced *Janus*, who, having got a professorship by looking one way, now hoped to get a bishopric by looking another.

On November 25th the prolocutor was presented to the Upper House, on which occasion he expatiated on the excellency of the Church of England, as at present constituted, intimating that no

amendments could be made, and closing with the words, *nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*. The Bishop of London, as president of the Upper House, replied that the clergy ought to be prepared to make concessions in matters not essential, and that it was their duty to show some indulgence to the Dissenters under King William, since some of the bishops and clergy had pledged themselves to do so in their addresses to King James.

At the next meeting, the Bishop of London informed the convocation that the royal commission was defective, inasmuch as the great seal had not been attached to it. They were, therefore, prorogued until the defect was supplied. In the interval, great exertions were made by the government to bring over some of the stiffest opponents in the Lower House, but with small success. On the 4th of December, the royal commission was communicated to the convocation, by which they were authorised to act. The commission stated that, "as rites and ceremonies are indifferent and alterable," changes might be made according to the exigencies of times and places, that it was desirable that the canons should be reviewed, and the ecclesiastical courts reformed. The convocation was accordingly empowered to treat of alterations, and to form canons and constitutions, to be submitted to his Majesty.

The king also sent a message, by the Earl of Nottingham, in which he expressed his hope that convocation would not "disappoint his good intentions, or deprive the Church of any benefit from their consultations."

Of course, it was necessary to acknowledge the royal message, by an address to his Majesty. This gave rise to vexatious and most disreputable squabbles; and the result was, that, without any discussion whatever on the important matters that had been recommended by the royal commissioners, convocation was dissolved on February 6, 1690; nor was it suffered to meet again for the transaction of business for the next ten years. Thus ended the project for *comprehending* Dissenters within the pale of the Church of England, the last attempt of the kind that has been made.*

From this time dates the long struggle between the two great parties of Conformists. These parties, indeed, had, under various forms, existed within the Anglican communion ever since the Reformation; but, till after the Revolution, they were not marshalled in regular and permanent order of battle against each

* Lathbury's *History of Convocation*, and Knight's *History of England*.

other, and therefore were not known by established names. Now they began to be called the High-Church party and the Low-Church party. The High-Church party sympathised with James, and were cool friends to William, and thought that no man who was an enemy to the ecclesiastical constitution of the realm ought to be permitted to bear any part in the civil government. The Low-Church party stood between the Nonconformists and the rigid Conformists, and contained, as it still contains, two different elements—a Puritan and a Latitudinarian element. They saw nothing in the existing polity and ceremonial of the Church of England which could make it their duty to become Dissenters; but, at the same time, they held that both the polity and ceremonial were means, not ends, and that the essential spirit of Christianity might exist without Episcopal orders, and without a Book of Common Prayer. They had, while James was on the throne, been mainly instrumental in forming the great Protestant coalition against Popery and tyranny, and they continued, in 1689, to hold the same conciliatory language which they had held in 1688. They greatly blamed the scruples of the Nonconformists, but thought the reflections thrown on them by the High-Church party to be grossly unjust.*

More than one Methodist historian has said that Samuel Wesley was "a rigid Tory in politics, and a High Churchman in religious principle;" that he "regarded Charles I. as properly a martyr; and was very much attached to the interests of James." I respectfully doubt, to some extent, the correctness of these assertions.

Samuel Wesley was not a Jacobite, and, in the first instance, he was not a Tory. There is no evidence to show that he was attached to the interests of James; but, on the contrary, he was disgusted with James's tyranny at Oxford, and was the author of the first pamphlet published in defence of the Revolution. John Wesley says, his father was a Tory, in the sense of being "one that believes God, not the people, to be the origin of all civil power;"† but he likewise asserts, that his "father always praised God for the happy revolution of 1688."‡

Then as it regards his being a High Churchman;—it is true that he considered Charles I. as an injured sovereign and properly a martyr. He held the same opinions as his son John,

* Macaulay.

† Wesley's *Works*, vol. xiv., p. 342.

‡ *Genl. Mag.*, 1785, p. 247.

who writes, "All agree that King Charles was a pattern of piety, sobriety, temperance, and chastity. He could not endure an obscene or profane word. He was punctual in his devotions, both public and private. He was rigorously just; but is supposed to have been sometimes wanting in sincerity. He was a good father, a good master, and a good husband; yea, a fond one, which was the chief source of his troubles, together with the wrong bias towards arbitrary power which had been instilled into him from his infancy. But for this, he would have been one of the most accomplished princes that ever sat upon the English throne."* But allowing that Samuel Wesley held such opinions,—what then? Is that a proof that Samuel Wesley was, "in religious principle, a High Churchman?" We greatly doubt it.

The High-Church party were most bitter opponents of Tillotson, the leader of the Low-Church party; whereas, Samuel Wesley was his ardent admirer, and even excessive eulogist. The High-Church party were most vehemently opposed to the scheme of Tillotson and King William, for "Comprehension," or the uniting of Conformists and Nonconformists; while on the other hand, the Low-Church party desired its adoption; and, in this respect, Samuel Wesley agreed with them. He was in favour of admitting the Dissenters within the pale of the Established Church, and, therefore, we infer that he was in favour of the modification of church rites and ceremonies, as recommended by Tillotson and his friends in 1689. The following is an article taken from the *Athenian Oracle*, (vol. i. p. 301,) and was probably written by Samuel Wesley himself, or at all events, it was sanctioned by him, as one of the chief members of the Athenian Society:—

"A Comprehension, or the uniting of Conformists and Nonconformists, is undoubtedly necessary for the reforming of England. 1. Because the schism itself, on which side soever the fault lies, is a great sin and scandal, and highly needs reformation. That there is a schism is as plain as that one and one are not one, but two; since there are different churches, different communions, and hearers more different and opposite than either. 2. This union is further necessary, even to *personal reformation*, because the want thereof has so much obstructed it; persons being more concerned for their own particular tenets than for common Christianity; nay, entertaining the most bitter, scurrilous, and profane scoffs

* Wesley's *History of England*, vol. iii. p. 221.

against the contrary party, even in their most solemn and religious performances, with approbation and pleasure. Thus while one laughs at the other's preaching, and the other at his praying, the Atheist laughs at both, and there are very many that believe neither. 3. Another reason is, because we see not how the ancient church discipline, so much desired, and the loss thereof so much lamented, can ever without this be renewed. As things now are, let a person be excommunicated in our Church, he has the Dissenters to fly to; in theirs, he flies to us, or indeed keeps between both, rails at all, and is of neither. 4. Again, while this fatal and scandalous division lasts, it cannot be avoided, but there will still be different interests, and that powerful ones, whose struggle will be not only dangerous to the State, but breed animosities, strife, and bitterness in the different parties."*

Such were Samuel Wesley's arguments in favour of the attempt to bring Dissenters within the pale of the Church of England. This was not the language of the High-Church party; for that party were most stoutly opposed to the propounded scheme altogether. Samuel Wesley was no partisan of theirs; and it is a most unaccountable mistake for respectable writers to suppose he was. If he was a party man at all, he unquestionably belonged to the Tillotson or Low-Church party. It is true, that ten or twelve years afterwards, he was brought into most painful collision with his Dissenting brethren; but the fault was not his so much as Mr Clavel's. The controversy that then took place was mournfully bitter, but it was prompted more by politics than by religion; and though it led to a full and final separation between him and his old Dissenting friends, yet we are not aware that there is a particle of evidence to show, that after this he imbibed any of the supercilious and superstitious notions generally entertained by the High-Church party of the present day. He held his ecclesiastical and political principles clearly, conscientiously, and firmly; but he was not a bigot; and, if such a confederacy as the Evangelical Alliance had then existed, he could, without a scruple, have become a sincere and active member of it.

Before leaving the High and the Low Church parties in the days of King William, it may be added, that though the Low-Church clergymen were a minority, and not a large minority, of

* The reader will find another article, even more explicit, in the *Athenian Oracle*, vol. iii. p. 511.

their profession, their weight was much more than proportion to their numbers. We should probably overrate their strength if we were to estimate them at a tenth part of the whole. Yet it will scarcely be denied that there were among them as many men of distinguished eloquence and learning as could be found in the other nine-tenths put together.

The head of the Low-Church party was the king. He was bred a Presbyterian; he was, from rational conviction, a Unitarian; and personal ambition, as well as higher considerations, prompted him to act as mediator among the Protestant sects. He was bent on effecting three great reforms in the laws relating to ecclesiastical matters. 1. To obtain for Dissenters permission to celebrate their worship in freedom and security. 2. To introduce such changes in the Anglican ritual and polity, as, without offending those to whom that ritual and polity were dear, might conciliate the moderate Nonconformists. 3. To throw open all ecclesiastical offices to Protestants without distinction of sect. The first only was attainable. He came too late for the second, and too early for the third.*

While the preceding events were happening in England, events of great importance took place in Scotland. The episcopacy was abolished, being a great and insupportable burden to the nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the great majority of the people. An act was also passed, in 1690, ordaining that Presbyterian ministers yet alive, who had been thrust from their charges since 1661, or banished for not conforming to the episcopacy, should forthwith be restored to their churches, their manse and glebes; and, by another act passed on the 7th of the same year, parliament ratified and established the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the public and avowed confession of the Scottish Church; and restored the government of the church by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and assemblies.

Such were the opposite effects of the Revolution upon the national Church in the two ends of the island,—in England confirming and confirming the established Episcopacy,—in Scotland sweeping it utterly away, and in its place re-erecting the edifice of presbytery on broader and deeper foundations than ever.

* Macaulay.

The position in which the Revolution placed the generality of Protestant Dissenters has been explained in the account given of the Toleration Act, which was the only measure passed in their favour. From the benefits of this act the Roman Catholics and the Socinians were excluded; and, in 1699, the former were placed under greater restrictions than ever. It was then enacted by parliament,—1. That a reward of a hundred pounds should be paid to every person who should apprehend any Popish bishop, priest, or Jesuit, and prosecute him to conviction, for saying mass, or exercising any other part of his office, within these realms. 2. That the priest so convicted should be adjudged to perpetual imprisonment. 3. That the keeping of a school by any Papist should be punished by the same penalty. 4. That every person, educated in the Popish religion, or professing the same, who, within six months after attaining the age of eighteen, should not take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and also subscribe the declaration against transubstantiation, the invocation of saints, and the sacrifice of the mass, should be incapable of inheriting, or taking by descent, any lands, tenements, or hereditaments; and that the next of kin, being a Protestant, should inherit the estates of which the Roman Catholic was thus deprived. 5. That all Papists should be incapable of purchasing any lands, either in their own names or in those of any other persons.*

This was a monstrous Act of Parliament; but when we take into consideration the sneaking perfidy, coarse brutalities, and blood-thirsty cruelties practised by Papists during late years in Ireland, in Scotland, and even in England itself,—when we remember that Papists in foreign lands were concocting dark intrigues against the British throne and British nation, recently rescued from the tyranny of papal domination,—and when we remember further, that, as lately as the year 1692, De Grandval, a captain of French dragoons, instigated by the Popish King James, had entered into a conspiracy against the life of King William, and had been shot for his intended assassination,—and that, in 1696, there had been another more widely ramified Popish plot for the same infernal purpose, which resulted in three of the conspirators being executed at Tyburn,—we are prepared to understand why Papists were excluded from the benefits of the Toleration Act, and why they were made the subjects of the legalised persecution of the act of

* Knight's *History of England*.

1699, "for the further preventing of the growth of Popery." Abstractedly considered, the act was monstrous, and merits reprobation; but severe maladies sometimes need severe remedies to effect their cure.

Our space forbids any further review of ecclesiastical affairs during William and Mary's reign; and we must now content ourselves with miscellaneous notices of this eventful period in English history.

In 1690 occurred the death of a man whose name, despite his almost insane eccentricities, will always occupy a place in English Church annals. More than forty years had elapsed, says Macaulay, since George Fox had begun to see visions and to cast out devils. He was then a youth of pure morals and grave deportment, with a perverse temper, with the education of a labouring man, and with an intellect in the most unhappy of all states; that is to say, too much disordered for liberty, and not sufficiently disordered for bedlam. At the time, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists were refuting and reviling each other. He applied in vain for spiritual direction and consolation. One jolly old clergyman told him to smoke tobacco and to sing psalms; another counselled him to go and lose some blood. After some time, he came to the conclusion that no human being was competent to instruct him in divine things; and that the truth had been communicated to himself by direct inspiration from Heaven. He argued that, as the confusion of languages began at Babel, and that, as the persecutors of Christ put on the cross an inscription in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, the knowledge of languages, and more especially of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, must be useless to a Christian minister. One of the most precious truths revealed to this new apostle was, that it was falsehood and adulation to use the second person plural instead of the second person singular. To say good morning or good evening was highly reprehensible, for the phrases evidently imported that God had made bad mornings and bad evenings. To talk of the month of March was to worship Mars; and to talk of Monday was to pay idolatrous homage to the moon. A Christian was bound to face death itself rather than touch his hat to the greatest of mankind. Bowing was considered as the effect of Satanical influence, for the woman in the gospel, while she had a spirit of infirmity, was bowed together, and ceased to bow as soon as divine power had liberated her from the tyranny of the evil one.

Fox long wandered from place to place, teaching this strange theology, shaking like an aspen leaf in his paroxysms of fanatical excitement, forcing his way into churches which he nicknamed steeple-houses, interrupting prayers and sermons with clamour and scurrility, and pestering rectors and justices with epistles much resembling burlesques of those sublime odes in which the Hebrew prophets foretold the calamities of Babylon and Tyre. He soon acquired great notoriety by these religious feats. His strange face, his nasal chant, his immovable hat, and his leather breeches, were known all over the country. He was repeatedly imprisoned and set in the stocks, sometimes justly, for disturbing the public worship of congregations; sometimes unjustly, for merely talking nonsense. He soon gathered round him a body of disciples, some of whom went beyond himself in absurdity. He also made some converts, as Barclay and Penn, to whom he was immeasurably inferior in everything, except the energy of his convictions. By these converts his rude doctrines were polished into a form somewhat less shocking to good sense and good taste. His gibberish was translated into English; and his system so much improved that he himself might have been excused if he had hardly known it. To the last his disciples professed profound reverence for him; and his crazy epistles were received and read in Quaker meetings all over the country. This founder of the Quaker sect died in 1690.*

As already intimated in a previous chapter, Samuel Wesley, like Macaulay, had no great liking for the Quakers. The following article, taken from the *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 331, in which the Quakers and Papists are compared, will tend to show his opinions concerning a sect which were much more numerous about two hundred years ago than they are at present, and whose views and vagaries then were much more wild than happily they are now:—

"Both Quakers and Papists are so bad that they can hardly be called Christian. In many things they are near akin. The Quakers, ever since their rise, have been looked upon as the Jesuit by-blows. The Quakers deny the plenary satisfaction of Christ, and rest on their own merits; so do the Papists. They rail at our ministers, and deny their legal call or ordination; so do the Papists. They pretend to a greater strictness and singu-

* Macaulay.

larity of life than other people; so do several orders among the Papists. Then, for fanaticism and enthusiasm, they are most admirably matched. But, to consider them asunder—The Papist holds more than he ought to do, and therefore all the articles of the Christian faith: but the Quaker much less, for the Quakers all deny the Christian sacraments, and we wonder how they have a face to pretend to what they never had, Christianity, when they were never christened. They are indeed a compendium of almost all sorts of heresies: for they not only deny the merits of Christ, with the Papists, but even His satisfaction and divinity, being at best no better than mere Arians. Nay, there have been some of them who, as far as we can understand them, deny our Saviour's manhood, and turn angels, spirits, heaven, and hell into mean and jejune allegories. All of them, to a man, whom we ever met with, deny the Scriptures to be the *Word of God*, and most of them deny any resurrection of the body. For these reasons, we think, as a bad Christian is better than none, so a Papist is better than a Quaker.”*

This may seem a caricatured description of the Quakers' religion, but it must be borne in mind that in 1690 that religion was not the systematised and inoffensive thing that it is in 1865.

Of all the members of the Low-Church party, in the reign of William and Mary, Tillotson stood the highest in general estimation. He was the son of a clothier, and was born at Sowerby Bridge, in Yorkshire, in 1630. His first sermon was preached at the morning exercise in Cripplegate, in 1661. Thirty years afterwards he was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, in the Church of St Mary le Bow. The congregation was the most splendid that had been seen in any place of worship since William and Mary's coronation. The crowds that lined the streets greeted the new primate with loud applauses; but the applauses of his friends could not drown the roar of execration which the Jacobites and High-Church party set up against him. According to them, he was a thief, who had entered not by the door, but had climbed

* In the fourth volume of the *Athenian Oracle* Wesley vindicates his charges against the Quakers by quotations from their writings, and sums up the matter thus:—"Quakerism is a compendium of all heresies, some of which we shall name—Pharisees, Sadducees, Ebionites, Gnostics, Eucratites, Marcionites, Cainites, Manichees, Jacobites, Acephalae, Tritheites, Adamites, Helcecaites, Marcocites, Colorbalites, Sabellians, Samosatrenians, Macedonians, Arians, Donatists, Priscillians—cum multis aliis," (p. 366.)

over the fences. He was an Arian, a Socinian, a Deist, an Atheist. He had never been christened, for his parents were Anabaptists. He had lost their religion when a boy, and he had never found another. In ribald lampoons he was nicknamed "Undipped John." The parish register of his baptism was produced in vain. This storm of obloquy, which he had to face for the first time at more than sixty years of age, was too much for him. His spirits declined, his health gave way, and in 1695 he died, and Samuel Wesley, his sincere and warm admirer, wrote and published his elegy.

Tillotson was sincere, frank, and humble; of kind and tender affection, bountiful in his charities, and forgiving of injuries. After his death, there was found a bundle of bitter libels which had been published against him, on which he had written with his own hand, "I forgive the authors of these books, and I pray God that He also may forgive them." His public principles were philanthropic, tolerant, and liberal. William and Mary reposed an entire confidence in his prudence, moderation, and integrity. In some points he was, perhaps, too compliant, and was led into some inconsistencies; but the times were difficult, and his intentions were always good. While he was in a private station of life, he always laid aside two-tenths of his income for charitable uses; and when he died, his debts could not have been paid if the king had not remitted his first fruits. As a preacher, he was thought, by his contemporaries, to have surpassed all rivals, living or dead. Posterity has reversed this judgment. Yet Tillotson still keeps his place as a legitimate English classic. His highest flights were indeed far below those of Taylor, of Barrow, and of South; but his oratory was more correct and equable than theirs. No quaint conceits, no pedantic quotations from Talmudists and Scoliaists, no mean images, buffoon stories, or scurrilous invectives, ever marred the effect of his grave and temperate discourses. His style is not brilliant, but it is pure and transparently clear. He is always serious, and always good. His sermons were published in three volumes folio. Addison considered them as a standard of the purity of the English language; and Dryden acknowledged that, if he had any talent for English prose, it was derived from frequent perusal of Tillotson's writings.

In 1694, on December 28, Queen Mary died, and Samuel Wesley composed and published a poem eulogising her character.

Being seized with smallpox, Mary gave orders that every lady of the bed-chamber, every maid of honour, nay, every menial servant, who had not had the smallpox, should instantly leave the house. She locked herself up during a short time in her closet, burned some papers, and arranged others, and then calmly awaited her decease. William remained night and day by her bedside; and a few moments before she expired he was removed, almost insensible, from the sick-chamber. The public sorrow at her death was great and general. When the Commons next met they sat for a time in profound silence. The number of sad faces in the street struck every observer. On the Sunday which followed her death, her virtues were celebrated in almost every parish church of the capital, and in almost every great meeting-house of the Nonconformists. The funeral was the saddest and most august that Westminster had ever seen. The two Houses, with their maces, followed the hearse; the Lords, robed in scarlet and ermine; the Commons in long black mantles. No preceding sovereign had ever been attended to the grave by a parliament; for, till then, the parliament had always expired with the sovereign. The whole magistracy of the city swelled the procession. The banners of England and France, Scotland, and Ireland, were carried by great nobles before the corpse. The pall was borne by the chiefs of the illustrious houses of Howard, Seymour, Grey, and Stanley. On the gorgeous coffin of purple and gold were laid the crown and sceptre of the realm. The day was well suited to such a ceremony. The sky was dark and troubled. The nave, choir, and transept of the abbey were in a blaze with innumerable wax-lights. The body was deposited under a sumptuous canopy in the centre of the church, while the primate preached; and throughout the whole ceremony the distant booming of cannon was heard every minute from the batteries of the Tower.*

As long as Queen Mary lived, William left the management of the affairs of the English Church wholly in her hands, and her chief confidant and counsellor was Archbishop Tillotson.

Whatever was Mary's character and conduct as a daughter and a sister, she was certainly the most devoted and exemplary of royal wives. Though, in accordance with the atrocious practice of sovereigns, her husband kept a mistress in the palace, yet

* Macaulay.

she had the good sense to submit to his commanding intellect. John Wesley says, she "was in her person tall and well-proportioned, with an oval visage, lively eyes, agreeable features, a mild aspect, and an air of dignity. Her apprehension was clear, her memory tenacious, and her judgment solid. She was a zealous Protestant, scrupulously exact in all the duties of dévotion, of an even temper, and of a calm and mild conversation." She was excellently qualified to be the head of the English court. She was English by birth, and English also in her tastes and feelings. Her face was handsome, her port majestic, her temper sweet and lively, her manners affable and graceful. Her understanding, though very imperfectly cultivated, was quick. Feminine wit sparkled in her conversation; and her letters were so well expressed that they deserved to be well spelt. She took much pleasure in the lighter kinds of literature, and did something towards bringing books into fashion among ladies of quality. The stainless purity of her private life, and the strict attention which she paid to her religious duties, were the more respectable, because she was singularly free from censoriousness, and discouraged scandal as much as vice. Her charities were munificent and judicious, and though she made no ostentatious display of them, it was known that she retrenched from her own state in order to relieve Protestants whom persecution had driven from France and Ireland, and who were starving in the garrets of London.*

The reign of William, her husband, extended to the year 1702. During the thirteen years that William wore the crown, the Bank of England was founded; the East India Company was reorganised; and the plantations or settlements of America and the West Indies so steadily increased, that, before his death, they employed not less than five hundred sail of ships. Sir Godfrey Kneller and Sir Peter Lely were the chief portrait-painters of the day; Purcell was the chief musician; and Sir Isaac Newton was shedding a glory over his age and country by his sublime scientific discoveries. The higher kinds of literature were at a discount for want of court patronage. Dryden, fallen on what to him were evil days and evil tongues, and forced in his old age to write for bread, with less rest for his wearied head and hand than they had ever had before, now produced some of his most laborious and also some of his happiest works; and Lee, the dramatic poet, dis-

* Macaulay.

charged from Bedlam, finished two more tragedies ; but besides these, there were hardly any poets above the rank of Shadwell, Tate, and Brady. Among other writers belonging to the same period may be mentioned :—Bishop Stillingfleet, who had been known as an author thirty years before William's accession to the throne ; Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough, an exceedingly learned writer, who, at the age of eighty-four, began to study, and mastered the Coptic language, was now in the full zenith of his fame ; Bishop Bull was writing his "*Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*," for which he received the thanks of the whole body of the clergy in France ; good old Richard Baxter, who had been filling the world with books for half a century, just lived to see the Revolution, and died in 1691 ; Dr Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, was plying his prolific pen, which, during his lifetime, produced one hundred and forty-five distinct publications ; Robert South, immortalised by his masculine, if not spiritual sermons, was carrying on a controversy with Sherlock respecting the Trinity ; and John Locke was publishing his "*Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*."

The population of England, in the reign of King William, was about seven millions. About ten thousand of these were clergymen, with an average income of £60 each per annum. The average wages of labouring people and out-door servants were five shillings and ninepence farthing per week ; and the average income of cottagers and paupers fourpence farthing per day.* Such was the state of things when Samuel Wesley was flourishing among his two hundred peasant parishioners at South Ormsby, on £50 a year and a parsonage,—an income nearly equal to the average income of the ten thousand clergy living at that period.

King William died on the 8th of March 1702. Samuel Wesley's son John says—"Upon the whole, William III. appears to have been an honest, conscientious man, fearing God, and desirous to please Him. His good qualities were many, his ill ones few ; so that we may well rank him among the best of the English princes." †

At eighteen William sat among the fathers of the Common-

* Knight's *History of England*.

† Wesley's *History of England*, vol. iv., p. 41.—Dr Adam Clarke says that Samuel Wesley was one of King William's chaplains, but on what authority I know not.

wealth, grave, discreet, and judicious as the oldest among them. At twenty-one he was placed at the head of the administration. At twenty-three he was renowned throughout Europe as a soldier and politician. His personal tastes were those of a warrior rather than of a statesman; but he occupies a far higher place among statesmen than among warriors. From a child he had been weak and sickly. In the prime of manhood his complaints had been aggravated by a severe attack of smallpox. He was asthmatic and consumptive. His slender frame was shaken by a constant hoarse cough. He could not sleep unless his head was propped by several pillows, and could scarcely draw his breath in any but the purest air. Cruel headaches frequently tortured him. Exertion soon fatigued him. Yet, through a life, which was one of long disease, the force of his mind never failed, on any great occasion, to bear up his suffering and languid body.

His frame was slender and feeble; his forehead lofty and ample; his nose curved like the beak of an eagle; his eye bright and keen; his brow thoughtful and somewhat sullen; his mouth firm and somewhat peevish; and his cheek pale, thin, and deeply furrowed by sickness and by care. He possessed strong natural sense and rare force of will. Long before he reached manhood, he knew how to keep secrets. Meanwhile, however, he made but little proficiency in fashionable or literary accomplishments. His manners were altogether Dutch, and even his countrymen thought him blunt. To foreigners, he often seemed churlish. He was entirely destitute of sociability. He seldom came forth from his closet; and when he appeared in the public rooms, he stood among the crowd of courtiers and ladies stern and abstracted, making no jest and smiling at none. His freezing look, his taciturnity, the dry and concise answers which he uttered when he could keep silence no longer, disgusted noblemen and gentlemen, who had been accustomed to be slapped on the back by their royal masters, called Jack or Harry, congratulated about race cups, or rallied about actresses. The women also missed the homage due to their sex. They observed that the king spoke in a somewhat imperious tone even to the wife to whom he owed so much, and whom he sincerely loved. Another thing, which was regarded as one of his misfortunes, was his bad English. He spoke our language, but not well. His accent was foreign, his diction was inelegant, and his vocabulary seems to have been no larger than was

necessary for the transaction of business. English literature he was incapable of enjoying or of understanding. He never once, during his whole reign, showed himself at the theatre. Next to hunting, his favourite amusements were architecture and gardening. He had some talent for sarcasm, and frequently employed a natural rhetoric, quaint indeed, but vigorous, and original. From a child, he listened with interest when questions of alliance, finance, and war were discussed. He understood Latin, Italian, and Spanish; and spoke and wrote, with more or less correctness, English, French, and German. The Dutch was his own tongue. For all persecution he felt a fixed aversion. His theological opinions were loose, but were more decided than those of his ancestors; and predestination was the keystone of his religion. Since Octavius, the world had seen no such instance of precocious statesmanship. He died at the age of fifty-two.

[This chapter is compiled from the *Histories* of Wealey, of Knight, and of Macaulay, Calamy's *Life and Times*, and other works of a kindred character.]

CHAPTER X.

LAST DAYS AT SOUTH ORMSBY—1694-1696.

WE must return for a little while to South Ormsby, small, but neat and picturesque, and the first home of Samuel and Susannah Wesley. Here they lived about five years. Here the rector's wife brought him one child additional every year, and did her best to make £50 per annum go as far as possible. Here he plied his pen with unceasing diligence, and wrote many of his articles for the *Athenian Gazette*, and also his contributions to the "Young Student's Library," and "The Complete Library, or News for the Ingenious;" here he finished his "Life of Christ," and here he composed two other poems, which must now be noticed.

Queen Mary died at the end of the year 1694; and her confidential friend and adviser, Dr Tillotson, died two months afterwards. In 1695, Samuel Wesley published, in a sort of folio pamphlet of twenty-nine pages, his "Elegies on the Queen and Archbishop." The title of the first is as follows:—"On the Death of her late sacred Majesty, Mary, Queen of England, a Pindarique Poem." The title of the second is—"A Poem on the Death of his Grace, John, late Archbishop of Canterbury." The Elegy on the Queen consists of twenty-five verses of from twenty to thirty lines each; and that on the archbishop of sixty-two verses of four lines to a verse.

Both the poems are written in the highest style of eulogy. The following are the first lines of the Elegy on the Queen. The death of Mary is represented as a judgment inflicted on account of the sins of the nation, and is also considered as the harbinger of other judgments to follow. The reference to the Shechinah is in bad taste, and almost profane:—

"Ah, sinful nation! Ah, ungrateful Isle!
See what thy crimes at last have done!
At last thy Shechinah is gone;
Thy beauteous sun no more must on thee smile,

Thy dove is shelter'd in the ark ;
 The heavens are silent all and dark,
 Dark as thy fate,—or where,
 Through horrid rifts, some streaks of light appear,
 They bode a dreadful flood
 Of fire and blood."

The following is from the twenty-fifth stanza, and is meant to be descriptive of Mary's admission into heaven. The extract is inserted with reluctance ; but, in delineating character, faults as well as virtues must be noted :—

" How was heaven moved at her arrival there !
 With how much more than usual art and care,
 The angels, who so oft to earth had gone,
 And borne her incense to the Eternal's throne,
 For her new coronation now prepare !
 How welcome ! how caressed !
 Among the blest !
 And first mankind's great mother rose—
 ' Give way, ye crowding souls ! ' said she,
 ' That I the second of my race may see ! ' "

Notwithstanding our high veneration for Samuel Wesley, we feel bound to say that such lines are fulsome foolishness. In the whole, Mary was a good woman, but Wesley's eulogy of her is sadly excessive :—

" Would virtue take a shape, she 'd choose to appear,
 And think, and speak, and dress, and live like her.
 Zeal without heat, devotion without pride,
 Work without noise, did all her hours divide ;
 Wit without trifling, prudence without guile,
 Pure faith, which no false reasoning e'er could spoil,
 With her, secured and blest our happy Isle."

The poem on Tillotson is written in the same eulogistic strain. The primate is represented as one who excelled in pulpit, church and state. As a preacher, he taught without noise, and differed from others without strife. As a prelate, he was watchful, humble, wise. As a statesman, unambitious and upright :—

" 'Twas music, poetry, and rapture all,
 The sweets of his oraculous words to share ;
 As soft they fell, as balmy dewdrops fall,
 As smooth as undisturbed ethereal air.
 One word you cannot take away ;
 Complete as Virgil's, his majestic sense ;
 To twenty ages of the world, shall stay,
 The standard he of English eloquence."

Dr Adam Clarke properly observes, that " great and good

both the queen and archbishop were, both their characters are sadly overdrawn, and their praises are extended even beyond poetic licence. These, and some other of Mr Wesley's early productions excited the ridicule of the wits, and made him the subject of such an occasional squib as the following, written by John Dunton :—

“ Poor harmless Wesley, let him write again ;
Be pitied in his old heroic strain ;
Let him in reams proclaim himself a dunce,
And break a dozen stationers at once.”

Mr Wesley, as we have seen, was an enthusiastic, an almost doltrous, admirer of Queen Mary and of Archbishop Tillotson ; and some writers have been pleased to intimate that this arose from special favours which her Majesty and the archbishop had shown him. This is an unwarranted and unworthy insinuation. It cannot be denied that Wesley received kindness from the queen ; but there is no evidence to show that he was indebted to Tillotson for any favour whatever. Wesley himself declares, in a letter to be given hereafter, that because he dedicated his “ Life of Christ ” to Queen Mary, the queen gave him the Epworth living. He never asked for it. “ It was proffered and given without his ever having solicited any person, and without his ever expecting, or even once thinking of such a favour.” He adds, “ The favours which our blessed queen was pleased to bestow on me, after she had read my book, were as far beyond my expectation as my desert.”*

There is no doubt that all this is substantially correct ; though it involves a discrepancy in dates, which it is hard to reconcile. Wesley says that it was through the queen that he obtained Epworth living ; and yet he was not inducted into that living until two years after the queen was dead. The probability is that the queen made some arrangement that Wesley should be the next presentee to Epworth benefice ; and, after her decease, the arrangement was carried out. Be that as it may, it is an unquestioned fact, that Wesley was indebted to the kindness of Queen Mary ; but it is an unwarrantable imputation to say that it was because of this that he used such excessive flattery in Queen Mary's Elegy. We find the same extravagant praises used concerning her in the very book which led to the Epworth living being given ; thereby showing that Wesley was a most warm admirer of the queen

* Wesley's Answer to Palmer.

before he received any of her royal kindnesses. After having lauded the virgin mother of our Saviour, he adds :—

“ And after thee, oh full of charms and grace !
 Let our great Mary fill the second place !
 For other queens long mayst thou look in vain,
 Others like her, to fill thy glorious train.
 Humble like thee, like thee of royal line,
 Her soul to Heaven submits, and bow'd like thine !
 Heaven, which immaculate her form design'd,
 As a fit mansion for so fair a mind.
 Which gave her eyes, that love and awe inspire,
 And cheer the world like the sun's vital fire.
 Oh may they on my humble labours shine,
 With their kind influence gild each happy line !
 Endue with purer forms the coarser ore,
 And stamp it bullion, though 'twas dross before.” *

In this way we dispose of the imputation, that Wesley's extravagant eulogies of Queen Mary would not have been written if Queen Mary had not shown him favour. The thing is false, for he wrote such eulogies before any favour had been granted. His eulogies may be foolish, but they are not fawning. He loved his queen, and therefore praised her.

As it respects the archbishop, there is not a scrap of evidence to show that Wesley was ever indebted to him for kindness of any kind ; on the contrary, it was through Tillotson that Wesley was not made an Irish bishop. Hence the following extract from a letter written by his Grace only four months before Mary's death. The letter was addressed to the Bishop of Salisbury, and is dated “ Lambeth House, August 31, 1694.” The primate says :—

“ My Lord Marquis of Normanby having made Mr Waseley† his chaplain, sent Colonel Fitzgerald to propose him for a bishopric in Ireland, wherewith I acquainted her Majesty ; who, according to her true judgment, did by no means think fit. Their Majesties have made Dr Foley Bishop of Down, and Dean Pulleyn‡ Bishop of Cloyne.” †

And so, in all likelihood, Dr Foley or Dean Pulleyn obtained the bishopric which the Marquis of Normanby wished to obtain for Samuel Wesley. We know nothing of the history and merits of these gentlemen. Perhaps they were well qualified for the Episcopate.

* Wesley's *Life of Christ*.

† Thus the name is spelt in the letter ; but there can be no doubt that *Waseley* is meant.

‡ Birche's *Life of Tillotson*.

copal station to which they were exalted, or perhaps they were not; for bishoprics have not always been given to men the best qualified and the most deserving. It is not improbable that, in learning and talent, Samuel Wesley was vastly superior to Dr Foley and Dean Pulleyne; but we cannot, on this ground, commend the wisdom of the application made by the Marquis of Normanby, or argue that at present Samuel Wesley was fit to be made a bishop. Wesley was only thirty-two years of age; it was not more than six years since he had been ordained; and his ministry, during that period, had been, to a great extent, confined to a small parish of not more than two hundred and fifty inhabitants. He had neither age nor experience sufficient for the Episcopal office. Normanby's application was hasty and imprudent; and the disapproval of the archbishop and the queen was seemly and right. At the same time, the letter of the archbishop above quoted, is written in terms so frigid as to lead to the conclusion that, however much Samuel Wesley admired the archbishop, the feeling was not reciprocal, and was of no advantage to the poor rector who cherished it.

We have already seen that the Marquis of Normanby was one of Wesley's warm-hearted friends. It was through this nobleman that he obtained the living of South Ormsby.* His lordship had a house in the parish, and Wesley acted as his chaplain. The Marquis was well acquainted with the poor, hard-working, literary person, and was well able to estimate his character and his merits.

Normanby was a remarkable man, and was descended from a long series of illustrious ancestors. He was the son of the Earl of Mulgrave, and was born in 1649. He was early distinguished for his bravery and accomplishments. The inefficiency of his tutor induced him, at twelve years of age, to educate himself; and his literary acquisitions are the more wonderful, inasmuch as those years in which they are commonly made, were spent by him in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court. At seventeen, when war was declared against the Dutch, he engaged as a volunteer on board the ship in which Prince Rupert sailed, and was rewarded for his zeal by the command of one of the independent troops of horse then raised to protect the coast. When another Dutch war broke out in 1672, he went again a volunteer in

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

the ship which the celebrated Lord Ossory commanded ; and his behaviour was such that he was advanced to the command of the *Catherine*, the best second-rate ship in the navy. In 1674, he was installed Knight of the Garter, and made one of the lords of the bedchamber to Charles the Second, with whom he was a great favourite. He afterwards went into the French service to learn the art of war under Turenne. When the unlucky Monmouth fell into disgrace, he was recompensed with the lieutenancy of Yorkshire and the government of Hull. Having had the boldness to aspire at courting Lady Anne, afterwards Queen of England, King Charles,* in 1680, sent him out to Tangiers, intentionally, it is said, in a leaky ship, hoping that he would either perish at sea, or in battle with the Moors on land. The Moors, without a contest, retired before him, and he returned to England in safety ; was well received by the king, and continued a wit and a courtier as before. On the accession of James the Second, he was admitted into the Privy Council and made lord-chamberlain. He accepted a place in the high commission ; and, having few religious scruples, he attended the king at mass, and kneeled with the rest, but refused to be converted. He lamented, but acquiesced in the revolution, and voted for the conjunctive sovereignty of William and Mary. For some years, he looked on King William with malevolence, and lived without employment ; but, notwithstanding this aversion, he was made Marquis of Normanby in 1694, and, about the year 1700, was received into the Cabinet Council with an annual yearly pension of £3000. On the accession of Anne in 1702, he was made Lord Privy Seal, and then was created Duke of Normanby, and afterwards Duke of Buckingham. He died in 1720, at Buckingham House in St James's Park, an edifice which he had erected himself, leaving a son by his third wife, a natural daughter of King James by the Countess of Dorchester. He was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory, bearing an inscription of his own composition, beginning ; " In doubt, but not in wickedness, I lived. In doubt, but not in fear, I die." He wrote the " Vision," and other poems ; two tragedies, called " Julius Cæsar " and " Brutus," and several prose works, consisting chiefly of historical memoirs, speeches in parliament, characters, dialogues, and essays. As a poet, he scarcely exceeds mediocrity ; though Pope and others

* Dryden's *Miscellaneous Works*, vol. i. Notes, p. 60, 1760.

were sufficiently influenced by his rank and patronage, to place him high among the votaries of the muse. Johnson's criticism is severe. "He is," says he, "a writer that sometimes glimmers, but rarely shines, feebly laborious, and at best but pretty. His songs are upon common topics; he hopes, and grieves, and repents, and despairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little stanzas; to be great, he hardly tries; to be gay, is hardly in his power. His verses are often insipid, but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perspicuity and elegance of an historian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet."

The same authority describes his character somewhat harshly. He writes:—"His character is not to be proposed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be supposed to have learned from Hobbes, and his morality was such as naturally proceeds from loose opinions. His sentiments, with respect to women, he picked up in the court of Charles; and his principles, concerning property, were such as a gaming table supplies. He is said, however, to have had much tenderness, and to have been very ready to apologise for his violences of passion."

Such, then, was the man who obtained for Samuel Wesley the living of South Ormsby, and in whose house Samuel Wesley acted as domestic chaplain. The year in which he asked that Wesley might be made an Irish bishop, was the year in which he himself was created Marquis of Normanby. Had his request been preferred to King James, or to Queen Anne, it would probably have been successful, but with King William and Queen Mary he was no favourite.

The Marquis of Normanby was a distinguished man, but his principles and morality were loose, and Samuel Wesley's position, as domestic chaplain, was not always the most comfortable. There can be little doubt that the following question and answer in the *Athenian Oracle*, (vol. i. p. 542,) were written by Wesley, and refer to his own office in the family of the marquis:—

"*Question*.—I am a chaplain in a certain family, which is not so regular and religious as I could wish it. I am forced to see mimes, drinking, gaming, &c., and dare not open my mouth against them, supposing from the little notice that is taken of me in matters of religion, and the great distance my patron keeps, that if I should pretend to blame anything of that nature, it would occasion nothing but the turning me out of the family. In the mean-

time unless I do speak, and modestly remonstrate, I think I do not what becomes a minister of religion, and am afraid may another day be justly condemned as partaker in other men's sins. Therefore, gentlemen, my humble request is to know of you what I ought to do, neither to betray the cause of religion nor give offence. I would gladly be satisfied how far a chaplain is obliged to take care of the morals of the family he lives in. Your answer may be of use to a great many beside myself, for my case is far from being singular. I cannot believe that to say grace and read prayers now and then, when my patron is at leisure, is all the duty of a chaplain, yet I find that we all think we have done enough when we have done that."

"*Answer.*—The pulpit is a privileged place, where, as custom has given you authority to speak, so you may with prudence so moderate your discourse as either to accomplish a reformation, or at least acquit yourself and discharge your own duty. Righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, if reasoned upon, as they were almost seventeen ages since, may find a second Felix. The pulpit is the most proper, and sometimes the only, place to convince strangers of their faults, but private retirements are convenient for friends and familiars. These are rules of latitude, but all the world is reducible to one of them, and the practice is indisputable."

No doubt "the misses, drinking, and gaming," of the Marquis of Normanby's house, occasioned the chaplain much uneasiness and distress of mind. The marquis was kind, but he was a rake; and Wesley was brought into company, not only with him but with his mistresses. To a man like himself, of the highest honour and strictest principles, this was extremely trying. At length matters came to a crisis. The following is given on the authority of Mr Wesley's son John:—

"The Marquis of Normanby had a house in the parish of South Ormsby, where a woman who lived with him usually resided. This lady *would* be intimate with my mother, whether *she* would or not. To such an intercourse my father would not submit. Coming in one day, and finding this intrusive visitant sitting with my mother, he went up to her, took her by the hand, and very fairly handed her out. The nobleman resented the affront so outrageously, as to make it necessary for my father to resign the living."

Such, then, was the occasion of Samuel Wesley leaving South Ormsby. This happened about the year 1696. While, however, Wesley resigned the South Ormsby living, he retained his chaplaincy in the house of the Marquis of Normanby. Four years after this, in 1700, when he published his "Short Discourse on Baptism," he announced himself on the title page as "Chaplain to the Most Honourable John Lord Marquis of Normanby;" and a year later, in 1701, he dedicated his "History of the Old and New Testament" to the Marchioness of Normanby, in a prosaic but flattering dedication; while about the same time, to relieve Wesley from some of his financial embarrassments, the marquis, with his own hand, gave him twenty guineas, and the marchioness five! All this shows that, though his rupture with the marquis's mistress rendered it expedient that he should remove from the parish in which she lived; he still, for years afterwards, retained his office in the marquis's family, and participated in the practical friendship of both him and the marchioness his wife.

During the years that Mr Wesley spent at South Ormsby five or six children seem to have been born to him. Samuel, the eldest of the family, was born in London; the names of the five or six, born at South Ormsby, were Susannah, Emilia, Annesley, Jedidiah, Susannah, and Mary.

The first, Susannah, died in April 1693, when a little more than two years old. Emilia was baptized by her father in South Ormsby church, January 13, 1692. Arriving at womanhood she married a Quaker, an apothecary at Epworth, of the name of Harper, who left her a young widow. Her husband was a violent Whig, and she was an unbending Tory. About five years before her father's death, she became a teacher at the boarding-school of a Mrs Taylor, in Lincoln, where she received bad treatment and worse wages. In 1735 she set up a school of her own at Gainsborough. For many years before her death, she was maintained entirely by her brothers, and lived at the preachers' house adjoining the chapel in West Street, Seven Dials, London. She died at nearly eighty years of age, about the year 1770. She is reported to have been beautiful in face and figure, and majestic in her address and carriage, and to have had "strong sense, much wit, a prodigious memory, and a talent for poetry." She was a good classical scholar, and wrote a beautiful hand. John Wesley said she was the best reader of Milton that he ever heard.

Annesley and Jedidiah were twins. They were baptized December 3, 1694, and both of them died in infancy.

Susannah, the second, was born in 1695, and, at the age of about twenty-six, was married to Richard Ellison, Esq., a man of good family, who farmed his own estate, and had a respectable establishment. She was good-natured, very facetious, and a little romantic, but behaved herself with the strictest moral correctness. She had a mind naturally strong and vivacious, and well refined by a good education. Her husband was little inferior to the apostate angels in wickedness. His mind was common, coarse, and uncultivated. He was the plague of his wife, and a constant affliction to her family. After bearing him several children, she left him, and hid herself in London, where she had considerable helps from her brother John. Henceforth she firmly refused to see her faithless and brutal husband, or to have any intercourse with him. Her son John lived and died an excise-officer in Bristol. Her daughter Ann married Mr Pierre le Lièvre, a French Protestant refugee, whose son Peter was educated at Kingswood school, took orders in the Church of England, and died at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. Her daughter Deborah married Mr Pierre Collet, another French refugee; and her son, Richard Annesley, died at the age of twenty-seven, leaving two orphan daughters, of whom Mrs Voysey, the excellent wife of a pious dissenting minister, was one. Mrs Ellison's husband was reduced to a state of poverty, and, through her brother John, obtained alms from Ebenezer Blackwell.* It is pleasing to relate that, at length, he became a reformed man; and that, on the 11th of April 1760, Charles Wesley writes: "I buried my brother Ellison, and prayed by him in his last moments. He said he was not afraid to die, and believed God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven him."*

Mary Wesley was born in 1696, and, therefore, just about the time that her father left South Ormsby. She was married to John Whitelamb, whom we shall have to notice in a future chapter. Through afflictions, and, probably, through some mismanagement in her nurse, she became considerably deformed, and her growth in consequence was much stunted: but all written and oral testimonies concur in the statement that her face was exquisitely beautiful, and was a fair and legible index to a mind and disposition almost angelic. Her humble, obliging, even, and amiable

* Wesley's Works, vol. xii. p. 165.

temper, made her the favourite and delight of the whole Wesley family. She died in early womanhood in becoming the mother of her first child. John Wesley preached her funeral sermon at Wroote; and her sister Mehetabel wrote an elegy, which was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1736, an extract from which, on account of its delineation of character and exquisite poetry, is here subjoined :—

“ From earliest dawn of life, through thee alone,
The saint sublime, the finish'd Christian shone;
Yet would not grace one grain of pride allow,
Or cry, “Stand off, I'm holier than thou!”
With business or devotion never cloy'd,
No moment of thy time pass'd unemploy'd;
Well-natured mirth, mature discretion join'd,
Most sure attendants on the virtuous mind!
A worth so singular, since time began,
But one surpass'd, and he was more than man.
Nor was thy form unfair, (though Heaven confin'd
To scanty limits thy exalted mind.)
Witness the brow, so faultless, open, clear,
That none could ask if honesty was there;
Witness the taintless lustre of thy skin,
Bright emblem of the brighter soul within!
That soul which easy, unaffected, mild,
Through jetty eyes, with cheerful sweetness smiled.
But oh! could fancy reach or language speak
The living beauties of thy lip and cheek,
Where nature's pencil, leaving art no room,
Touched to a miracle the vernal bloom;
Lost though thou art, in *Stella's* faithful line,
Thy face, immortal as thy fame, should shine.
To soundest prudence, (life's unerring guide,)
To love sincere, religion void of pride,
To friendship perfect in a female mind,
Which I nor wish nor hope on earth to find;
To mirth, (the balm of care,) from lightness free,
To steadfast truth, unwearied industry,
To every charm and grace comprised in you,
Most worthy friend, a long and last adieu!”

Little South Ormsby, to all interested in the history of the Wesley family, will always be an attractive place. Here Samuel Wesley spent about six of the best years of his life, and wrote some of his ablest works. Here he had at least five children born, and here he buried three. Hither he took his young wife, and his first-born son, Samuel. Here he had to join his wife in mourning the death of her father, Dr Annesley; and from here

to Epworth he and his wife took four young children, the eldest only six years old,—Samuel, Emilia, Susannah, and Mary.

Before finally quitting South Ormsby, it ought to be added, that Samuel Wesley, who took his degree of A.B. at Oxford in 1688, took his A.M. at Cambridge in 1694. The following notice is from the University Register, Cambridge:—

“ Incorporated 1694.

Sam. Westley, A.B., Coll. Exon. Ox.

Samuel Westley, A.M., Coll. C. C. Camb., 1694.” *

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

CHAPTER XI.

EPWORTH AND CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES.—1696 1699.

MR WESLEY removed to Epworth sometime during the year 1696 or 1697. This point is clearly settled by the inscription on his tombstone, which states that he died April 25, 1735, and that he had been Rector of Epworth thirty-nine years.

Epworth, in the county of Lincoln, is a small straggling market town, of about two thousand inhabitants. It is situated in what is called the Isle of Axholme, a low-lying district, ten miles long and four broad, surrounded by the three rivers, Trent, Don, and Idle. The island contains thirty-seven thousand eight hundred acres of land, and is divided into the seven parishes of Epworth, Althorpe, Belton, Crowle, Haxey, Luddington, and Owston, with their respective hamlets attached. Until within a short time before Mr Wesley's removal to Epworth, the whole of this district was little better than a swamp; but, at a great expense, it had recently been drained, and it is now exceedingly rich and fertile. Epworth stands in the centre of the island, and on the side of a small sloping hill. The view from the churchyard is extensive, terminating on the north with the Yorkshire wolds, and on the south with Gringley-on-the-Hill; on the east with the town of Kirton, and on the west with the spire of the church of Loughton-en-le-Morthen.

Epworth church is dedicated to Saint Andrew, and consists of a nave, of aisles, of a chancel, and a tower. The parsonage, first occupied by Mr Wesley, is thus described in a document dated 1607:—"It consists of five baies, built all of timber and plaster, and covered with straw thatche, the whole building being contrived into three stories, and disposed in seven chiefe rooms—a kitchinge, a hall, a parlour, a butterie, and three large upper rooms, and some others of common use; and also a little garden

empailed betwene the stone-wall and the south, on the south." There was also "one barn of six baies, built all of timber and clay walls, and covered with straw thatche; with outshotts about it, and free house thereby." There was likewise, "one dovecoate of timber and plaister covered with straw thatche;" and, finally, there was "one hemp-kiln, that hath been usealeie occupied for the parsonage ground, and joyning upon the south." The entire site of the parsonage and its adjuncts covered about three acres.* Here Samuel Wesley lived for about nine and thirty years. Let us trace his history.

Very shortly after his removal to Epworth, his daughter Mehetabel was born. Henry Moore and Adam Clarke say, she was her mother's tenth or eleventh child; but that is an evident mistake, for Mehetabel was born in 1697, which was only the eighth year after her mother's marriage.† The whole of the Wesley family were gifted with poetic genius, but Mehetabel perhaps shone the brightest, Samuel and Charles not excepted. From her childhood, she was gay and sprightly, full of mirth, good humour, and keen wit. At the early age of eight years, she had made such proficiency in learning, that she could read the Greek Testament. When about twenty-seven years of age, she was prevented marrying a man whom her father called "an unprincipled lawyer;" and, in the height of her vexation, made the rash vow, either never to marry another, or to take the first that might offer. Shortly after, she had an offer of marriage from a man named Wright, a journeyman plumber and glazier. Her father, fearing that she might still marry the man who had jilted her, urged her to marry Wright. She unhappily did so, and found her husband to be utterly unsuited to her in all respects. Her uncle Matthew gave her a small marriage portion, and, with this, Wright set up business for himself. He then began to associate with low dissolute companions, spent his evenings from home, became a drunkard; and, by ill-treatment, broke the heart of his wife. In a most exquisite poetical address to her husband, she speaks of her "heart-breaking sighs and fruitless tears;" often does she spend "half the lonely night" in waiting for her absent husband, and then, on his coming home from his carousals, "curbs her sighs, conceals her cares,"[‡] dashes away her tears; and, to please him, puts on a cheerful

* Stonehouse's *History of Azholme*.

† See Clarke's *Wesley Family*. Note, vol. ii. p. 136.

"smile." But despite all her attention and her tenderness, he still runs to "obscure and unclean retreats," and associates with drunken blackguards, who, as a great achievement, grin at "obscene jests and witless oaths." She then concludes her poem with the threat, that if this effort to regain his affection fails, she will abandon patience, and give herself up to rage and grief, until death restores to Wright his liberty, and gives him the opportunity "to laugh when Hetty is no more."*

Her husband carried on his business of plumbing and glazing in Frith Street, Soho, London. They had several children, all of whom died young. On the death of one of her infants in 1728, she wrote the following beautifully pathetic, but sad and saddening poem :—

"Tender softness ! infant mild !
Perfect, sweetest, loveliest child !
Transient lustre ! beauteous clay !
Smiling wonder of a day !
Ere the last convulsive start,
Rend thy unresisting heart ;
Ere the long-enduring swoon
Weigh thy precious eye-lids down ;
Ah, regard a mother's moan ;
Anguish deeper than thy own !

"Fairest eyes, whose dawning light,
Late with rapture bless'd my sight ;
Ere your orbs extinguish'd be,
Bend their trembling beams on me !
Drooping sweetness ! verdant flower !
Blooming, with'ring in an hour !
Ere thy gentle breast sustains
Latest, fiercest, mortal pains,
Hear a suppliant ! let me be
Partner in thy destiny !
That whene'er the fatal cloud
Must thy radiant temples shroud ;
When deadly damps (impending now)
Shall hover round thy destined brow
Diffusing may their influence be,
And with the blossom blast the tree !"†

These almost inimitable lines were sent to the Rev. John Wesley by Mehetabel's wretched husband, and were accompanied by the following letter, which is given here, as a contrast to his

* Moore's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i., p. 75.

† *Arminian Magazine*, 1778, p. 718.

wife's poem, and to show how the two were utterly unsuited for each other :—

"DEAR BRO,—This comes to Let you know that my wife is brought to bed and is in a hopefull way of Doing well but the Dear child Died—the Third day after it was born—which has been of great concerne to me and my wife She Joynes With me in Love to your Selfe and Bro. Charles

"From your loveing Bro. to Comnd

"WM. WRIGHT.

"P.S.—Ive sen you sum verses that my wife maid of Dear Lamb Let me hear from one or both of you as soon as you think Convenient."

Dr Adam Clarke observes, that Wright's letter is, like the ancient Hebrew, *without points*.

We cannot resist the temptation to give another poetic extract, as illustrative of Mehetabel Wesley's fine genius. It is selected from a poem, entitled, "A Farewell to the World," and refers to past days of happiness spent in the company of her sister Mary. After speaking of their visits to the poor and sick, she writes :—

"Wan, meagre forms, torn from impending death,
Exulting, blest us with reviving breath—
The shivering wretch we clothed, the mourner cheer'd,
And sickness ceased to groan when we appear'd—
Unask'd, our care assists with tender art
Their bodies, nor neglects the immortal part.
Sometimes in shades, unpierced by Cynthia's beam,
Whose lustre glimmer'd on the dimpled stream,
We wander'd innocent through sylvan scenes,
Or tripp'd like fairies o'er the level greens—
From fragrant herbage deck'd with pearly dew,
And flowerets of a thousand different hues,
By wafting gales the mingling odours fly,
And round our heads in whispering breezes sigh—
Whole nature seems to heighten and improve
The holier hours of innocence and love.

"Nor close the blissful scene, exhausted muse,
The latest blissful scene that thou shalt choose ;
Sate with life, what joys for me remain,
Save one dear wish, to balance every pain,—
To bow my head, with grief and toil oppress,
Till borne by angel-bands to everlasting rest !"

This remarkable woman, in after years, found peace with God. Charles Wesley speaks of her as "a gracious, tender, trembling soul; a bruised reed, which the Lord will not break; still harassed with 'darkness, doubts, and fears,' but against hope believing in hope." This was a few days before she died, in the year 1750.* John Wesley says, that for some years before her death she was "a witness of that rest which remains even here for the people of God."†‡ Mr Kirk justly remarks, that a careful analysis of Mehetabel's mental powers, a full estimate of her highly poetic genius, and a complete collection of her poems, would form a volume of no ordinary interest and value.

But to return to the parents of this gifted woman:—Very soon after their settlement at Epworth, Susannah Wesley was bereaved, by death, of her sister Dunton. Her father died just before the

* See C. Wesley's *Journal*.

† *Arminian Magazine*, 1778, p. 235.

‡ As a specimen of Mehetabel's wit, we subjoin the following riddle respecting a pen, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1734, and subscribed by her usual signature in that periodical, "*Sylvius*:"—

"A RIDDLE.

"I am an implement that's common,
 Much occupied by man and woman;
 Not very thick, nor very long,
 Yet tolerably stiff and strong.
 If inches twelve may give content,
 That measures much about my stent.
 Sometimes I'm only used for pleasure,
 And then I'm jaded out of measure;
 If a young, vigorous bard employs me,
 Egad, e'en to the stumps he tries me;
 A parson to get one in ten
 In private plies me now and then;
 The lawyer, and the doctor too,
 For fees will wear me black and blue.
 I have a dribbling at the nose,
 Which leaves a stain where'er it goes,
 And yet the fairest nymph will use me,
 The queen herself will not refuse me.
 I'm used by numbers of all arts,
 Who would be reckon'd men of parts;
 And none esteems a lady polish'd
 Who has not often me demolish'd;
 And let me tell you, by the by,
 A minute's labour drains me dry;
 I'm now exhausted, so have done;
 Now who, or what I am make known."

removal to Epworth ; her sister just after. This double bereavement was a most painful trial. Elizabeth Dunton, like her sister Susannah Wesley, was a remarkable woman. From her childhood she was pious. She was so thoroughly acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, that, if any text was quoted, she could at once tell the book, chapter, and verse where it might be found. For nearly twenty years, she kept a diary, and wrote so copiously, that her experiences and meditations, if printed, would have filled a folio. "She was a lover of solitude ; and Sabbaths, sermons, and sacraments were the best refreshments she met with in her way to glory. Her mind was always full of charity towards those who might differ from her in matters of opinion. She loved the image of Christ wherever it was formed. In her last sickness, which lasted about seven months, she never uttered a repining word ; and throughout the whole there was no doubt upon her spirit as to her future happiness. Among her last utterances were the following :—"Heaven will make amends for all ; it is but a little while before I shall be happy. I have good ground to hope that when I die, through Christ, I shall be blessed. It is a solemn thing to die. Oh, this eternity ! There is no time for preparing for heaven like youth. I look back with joy on some of the early years that I sweetly spent in my father's house. Oh, what a mercy it is to be dedicated to God betimes !" *

At her own desire, she was buried in Bunhill Fields. Her funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Timothy Rogers, M.A., and was published in a volume of nearly three hundred pages.†

The following is Dunton's description of her before their marriage :—"Tall ; of good aspect ; hair of light chestnut colour ;

* See Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

† Timothy Rogers was a Nonconformist preacher ; a good man, to whom Samuel Wesley, in a subsequent letter, acknowledges himself greatly indebted. Besides his voluminous funeral sermon for Mrs Dunton, he published a book, entitled, "Fall not out by the Way ; or, A Persuasion to a Friendly Correspondence between the Conformists and Nonconformists." Judging from the funeral sermon now before us, he was a man of great vivacity, wit, and mental vigour. He was also imbued with a thoroughly catholic and Christian spirit. "The way to agreement of all parties," he writes, "is not to bring men to be of one opinion, but to be of one mind ; which we may be, not by thinking the same things, but by thinking well one of another, endeavouring to preserve charity as carefully as to preserve truth. Carnal zeal may put us on disputing, but true zeal will put us upon prayer. For my part, I had rather be a quiet ploughman than a fiery philosopher."

dark eyes ; mouth small and sweet ; air somewhat melancholy, but agreeable ; neck long and graceful ; complexion fair ; piety scarce paralleled, and wit solid. She is sweetly modest, and has all kinds of virtues. She is an agreeable acquaintance, a trusty friend, and is mistress of all the graces that make a perfect woman."

In another place he writes concerning her :—"For the fifteen years we lived together there never passed an angry look. Her sympathies with me, in all the distresses of my life, make her virtues shine with the greater lustre. Like the glow-worm, that emblem of true friendship, she shined to me, even in the dark. My head no sooner ached, but her heart felt it. To requite her love I would have stripped myself to my very skin ; yea, mortgaged my very flesh to have served her. Indeed all our distresses of body and mind were so equally divided, that all hers were mine, and all mine were hers."

Dunton desired Samuel Wesley to write an epitaph for his departed wife. Wesley complied with the request, and with the epitaph sent the following significant epistle :—

"EPWORTH, July 24, 1697.

"DEAR BROTHER,—It has been neither unkindness to you, with whom I have traded and been justly used for many years, nor unthankfulness to Mr Rogers, (for I shall own my obligations to that good man while I live,) which has made me so long neglect answering your several letters ; but the hurry of a remove,* and my extraordinary business, being obliged to preach the visitation sermon at Gainsborough, at the bishop's coming hither, which is but just over. Besides, I would fain have sent you an elegy as well as an epitaph, but cannot get one to my mind, and therefore you must be content with half your desire ; and if you please to accept this epitaph, it is at your service. I hope it will come before you need another epithalamium.—I am, your obliged friend and brother,

"S. WESLEY." †

* This indicates that Samuel Wesley did not remove to Epworth until the spring, or early summer of 1697.

† Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

The epitaph was as follows, and is engraved on Mrs Dunton's tomb:—

"TEARS TO THE MEMORY OF MRS ELIZABETH DUNTON, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE—
May 28, 1697—

"Sacred urn ! with whom we trust
This dear pile of sacred dust ;
Know thy charge, and safely guard,
Till Death's brazen gate's unbarr'd ;
Till the Angel bids it rise,
And removes to Paradise.
A wife obliging, tender, wise ;
A friend to comfort and advise ;
Virtue, mild as Zephyr's breath ;
Piety, which smiled in death :
Such a wife and such a friend
All lament, and all commend.
Most, with eating cares, oppress,
He who knew and loved her best ;
Who her loyal heart did share,
He who reign'd unrivall'd there,
And no truce to sighs will give,
Till he die with her to live.
Or, if more we would comprize,
Here interr'd *Eliza* lies."

This epitaph was written within two months after Mrs Dunton's death. Dunton was professing unutterable distress on account of his wife's decease, and Wesley, in his epitaph, represents him as resolved to heave his agonizing sighs until death should reunite them in a more blissful world than this ; and yet, in the midst of all this pretended blubberment, Dunton was sweethearting another lady, and, before the year was out, actually made her his second wife. It is more than probable that Samuel Wesley had some knowledge of this unseemly haste to contract another matrimonial alliance, when, in the foregoing letter, he expressed the hope that the epitaph for Dunton's dead wife would come to hand before he needed an epithalamium for his second one.

Wesley and Dunton had been warm and faithful friends for, at least, the last fifteen years ; but, from this period, their friendship seems to have entirely ceased, and, ever after, Dunton speaks of his old friend with unmistakable animosity. "Now my purse is empty," snarls Dunton, "nobody knows me. There is the rectory of Epworth, that got his bread by the Maggots I published. He has quite forgotten me." Again—"My old friend, Mr Samuel

Wesley, was educated upon charity in a private academy, if we may take his own word for it in his late pamphlet, which was designedly written to expose and overthrow those academies. One would have thought that, either gratitude or his own reputation among his relations and best friends, might have kept him silent, though when a man is resolved to do himself a mischief, who can help it. Mr Wesley had an early inclination to poetry, but he usually wrote too fast to write well. Two hundred couplets a day are too many by two-thirds to be well furnished with all the beauties and graces of that art. He wrote very much for me, both in verse and prose, though I shall not name over the titles, because I am as unwilling to see my name at the bottom of them, as Mr Wesley would be to subscribe his own. Mr Wesley had read much, and is well skilled in the languages; he is generous and good-humoured, and caresses his friends with a great deal of passion so long as their circumstances are anything in order, and then he *drops* them. I challenge the rector of Epworth (for he is not yet 'My Lord,' nor 'His Grace,') to prove that I injure him in his character. I could be very *maggoty* in the character of this *conforming Dissenter*; but, except he further provokes me, I bid him farewell till we meet in heaven, and there I hope we shall renew our friendship; for, human frailties excepted, I believe Sam. Wesley a pious man. I shall only add, that giving this true character of Parson Wesley, is all the satisfaction I ever desire for his *dropping* an old friend. I shall leave him to struggle through life, and to make the best of it; but, alas!

'He loves too much the Heliconian strand,
Whose stream's ungarnish'd with the golden sand.'

I do not speak this out of prejudice to Mr Wesley; (for to forgive a slight is so easy to me, it is scarce a virtue,) but this *rhyming* circumstance of Mr Wesley is what I learn from the poem called, 'The Reformation of Manners,'* where are these words:—

'Wesley, with pen and poverty beset,
And Blackmore, versed in physic as in wit;
Though this of Jesus—that of Job may sing,
One bawdy play will twice their profits bring.
And, had not both caress'd the flatter'd crown,
This had no knighthood seen, nor that no gown.'†

* Written by Defoe.

† Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

All this is despicable growling. Dunton accuses Wesley that he had ceased to be his friend, or, to use his own word, which twice over he has italicised, because he had *dropped* him. But what of that? Had Wesley not had cause to drop him? Was it nothing that this man, who for fifteen years had been blessed, in the sister of Susannah Wesley, with one of the best wives that ever lived, began to sweetheart another within two months after she was dead, though all the while he was indulging in noisy grief for his irreparable loss, and was urging Wesley to write both an epitaph and an elegy, for the devoted and exalted woman whose place at his hearth and in his bed he was labouring to fill up with another? Was it surprising that Samuel Wesley should resent this insult to the memory of his wife's sister, and that he should *drop* the friendship of a man who was making himself such a fool? Wesley was no longer Dunton's *friend*; but there is no evidence that he became Dunton's *enemy*. On the contrary, when Dunton was crushed with financial embarrassments, Mr Wesley was not only a creditor, but *the chief* creditor, and wrote to Dunton assuring him that he should do nothing to his prejudice.* Dunton himself confesses this; and yet, with consummate and most ungrateful impudence, not only whines about Wesley's *dropped* friendship, but malignantly endeavours to injure Wesley's fair character.

Dunton, in the foregoing extract, insinuates that Wesley had written articles (we presume in the *Athenian Gazette*) which were discreditable both to him and to his publisher; but, in the absence of something more than insinuation, and taking into account the general character of Wesley's acknowledged writings, it is not unfair to say that Dunton's inuendo is as baseless as it is base.

Dunton intimates that Wesley had sought to be made a bishop, and had cast a longing eye on even the dignity of an archbishop. The same thing has been broadly uttered in a life of Defoe, recently written by William Chadwick. This pungent and scurrilous author says:—"Wesley made his way by flattering royalty; he could write either prose or poetry, and dedicate his work to the queen for the time being, and then ask for a living as the reward of his services. The rectory of Epworth was one produce of his pen, Queen Mary being the patron. The neighbouring living of Wroot he obtained for bedaubing with poetic flattery the Duke of

* Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

Marlborough, after his victory of Blenheim ; and his traducing of the Dissenters in the eventful year of 1703, was intended, through the royal patronage, to send this time-serving flatterer into the Archbishopric of Canterbury, upon the back of that unprincipled miscreant, Dr Sacheverell."*

The man that wrote this is as unprincipled as he says Sacheverell was. His assertions are a tissue of falsehoods, in support of which he adduces no evidence whatever. Samuel Wesley would have done no dishonour to a bishop's bench, but we fearlessly deny that there is any proof existing, except such as is found in mean insinuations, like those of John Dunton, that Samuel Wesley ever even "desired a bishop's office, much less that he wrote his books for the purpose of obtaining it." The whole thing is an unfounded and slanderous accusation, more disgraceful to the accusers than it is injurious to the accused. Chadwick, no doubt, founds his imputations against Wesley upon casual remarks made by men like Dunton ; but when Dunton and others fail to adduce proof, it is only fair to doubt their correctness, inasmuch as they are obviously animated by a malevolence which never scruples to utter falsehoods that are likely to blacken the character of the man it hates.

So far as can be ascertained, the first thing Mr Wesley published, after his removal to Epworth, was a "Sermon preached before the Society for the Reformation of Manners." This sermon was delivered, first, at St James's Church, Westminster, Feb. 13, 1698, about twelve months after the settlement at Epworth, and was afterwards repeated at St Bride's. The text is, "Who will rise up for me against evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" (Psalm xciv. 16;) and it is a curious fact that, sixty-five years after, John Wesley preached before the same society, from the same text, in West Street Chapel, Seven Dials.†

The Society for the Reformation of Manners was first instituted about the year 1677, which was just before Samuel Wesley became a student in the Stepney Academy. At that time Dr Anthony Horneck was at the height of his useful popularity. Horneck was educated first at Heidelberg, under the celebrated Spurzheim, and afterwards at Queen's College, Oxford. After

* Chadwick's *Life of Defoe*, p. 214.

† Wesley's *Works*, vol. vi., p. 140.

exercising his ministry in Oxford, and at Doulton, in Devonshire. he, in 1671, became preacher at the Savoy in London. At the Revolution he was honoured with the appointment of chaplain to King William and Queen Mary, and in 1693 became prebendary of Westminster. He died in 1696. He was a man of extensive learning; particularly conversant with the Oriental languages, ecclesiastical history, controversial theology, and casuistry, and was the author of several pious and learned works. Dunton says "he was a man of so great usefulness that none saw him without reverence, or heard him without wonder."

Another popular and useful preacher, belonging to the same period, was Mr Smithies, who was curate of Cripplegate for thirty years, and preached the morning lecture at St Michael's, Cornhill, where he was so well beloved that he sought no other preferment. The eccentric writer last quoted says, "His faithful and excellent preaching commanded the attention of men, and his constancy in it procured their love. He was a most humble and hearty Christian, and his practical books were in great esteem."

A third distinguished man must here be mentioned—William Beveridge. At the university, Beveridge so much excelled in the learned languages, that, at the age of eighteen, he wrote a Syrian grammar, and a treatise on the excellency and use of the Oriental tongues. Three years after, in 1661, he became vicar of Ealing, in Middlesex, and subsequently he was appointed Rector of St Peter's, Cornhill, Prebend of St Paul's, &c. In 1691, the see of Bath and Wells was offered him, but he declined accepting it. In 1704, he became Bishop of St Asaph; and, in this elevated station, prosecuted with great zeal and diligence every practicable measure for advancing the interests of religion. He died in 1708 and left the greatest part of his estate to the societies for propagating the gospel, and for promoting Christian knowledge. Beveridge was a voluminous author; and, as a preacher, was so successful, especially at St Peter's, Cornhill, that he was denominated "the great reviver and restorer of primitive piety."

The earnest preaching of these three godly ministers was the means of converting a considerable number of young men who applied to them for religious counsel. Beveridge, Horneck, and Smithies advised them "to meet together once a week, and to apply themselves to good discourse and things wherein they might edify."

one another." They acted upon this advice, and, at every meeting, made a collection for the poor. By means of the fund thus provided, numbers of poor families were relieved, and some were put into a way of trade; sundry prisoners were set at liberty by the payment of their debts, several orphans were maintained, and a few poor scholars received assistance at the university.*

These converted young men soon found the benefit of their weekly conferences with each other. Each person related his religious experience to the rest, and thus they became the means of building themselves up in the faith of Christ. The reader will at once perceive that John Wesley's United Societies of Methodists, with their weekly class meetings, instituted sixty-two years afterwards, were almost, if not altogether, an exact revival of these weekly meetings, begun in 1677.

For the better management of their charitable fund, two stewards were elected in 1678. The meetings were continued until the accession of James II. in 1685. At this period, all private meetings began to be regarded with suspicion, and the result was, that some of the members of these pre-Methodist societies ceased to attend such weekly assemblies for Christian fellowship; others became lukewarm in religious matters; and some became extra-

* Bishop Burnet states that there had formerly been societies of this description both among the Puritans and Dissenters; but the societies which now sprung up belonged to the Established Church. He adds, they were chiefly conducted by Dr Beveridge and Dr Horneck. Some disliked them, and were afraid they might give birth to new factions; but wiser and better men thought it was not fit to check a spirit of devotion at such a time. After the Revolution, these societies became more numerous; and, by means of their collections, maintained the clergy to read prayers at so many places, and at so many different hours, that devout persons might avail themselves of the privilege of joining in sacred worship at every hour of the day. There were constant sacraments in many churches every Sabbath; and there were greater numbers present at both prayers and sacraments than had been observed in the memory of man. The societies began to inform the magistrates of swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, and adulterers; and, because of this, they were called Societies of Reformation. Some of the magistrates encouraged them, but others treated them roughly. Some of the societies set themselves to raise charity schools; others printed books, and distributed them over the nation; and were, therefore, called societies for propagating Christian knowledge. In many places of the nation the clergy met together to confer about matters of religion and learning. And, last of all, a corporation was created by King William for propagating the Gospel among heathens, and for settling schools in our plantations.—*Burnet's History of his own Time*, 1st edition, vol. ii. p. 318.

vagant and vain. A few, however, continued faithful, and resolved to exert themselves to the utmost in maintaining and increasing the purity and power of religion in themselves and others. At their own expense, they set up public prayers, every evening at eight o'clock, at St Clement Danes, where there was always a full congregation. They also instituted, in the same church, an evening monthly lecture, which was preached by the most eminent divines in London. All this excited attention. The Papists, then in power, regarded these young Christians with hatred and anxiety, and exercised their malignant cunning to ensnare them. Just at this juncture, and probably for political reasons, the name of "Society" was exchanged for that of "Club;" and instead of the weekly meetings being held, as heretofore, in the house of a friend, who might be endangered by such assemblies, they were held in quiet taverns, where the members could have a room appropriated to themselves, and where, under the pretext of a small expenditure in tavern refreshments, they could safely recite their religious experience, and confer on plans of religious usefulness.

On the accession of William and Mary to the throne, in 1689, religious secrecy was no longer needed, and the societies now began to extend the sphere of their operations. At first their chief object, in their weekly meetings, was to afford to each other mutual assistance in their Christian life; but, now, they enacted a rule that every member should endeavour to add to the society at least one other member. This led to an amazing increase of their numbers, and the result was that similar societies were multiplied in all parts of London.* This led some ill-affected persons to report to the bishop of the diocese that these societies were engendering religious pride, and would issue in a church schism. A vindication was sent to the bishop, stating that the only object the members had, was to quicken each other's affections towards spiritual things, and to assist each other to live in all respects as Christians. The bishop was satisfied, and said, "God forbid that I should be against such excellent designs!"

The charge against the societies of intending to create a schism

* For most of these facts, and for many that follow, the writer is indebted to "An Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies in the City of London, &c., and of their endeavours for Reformation of Manners," by Josiah Woodward, D.D. The sixth edition. London, 1744.

was most unfounded ; for so far was it from their purpose to form a sect, that they carefully guarded against the possibility of this, by their strict attendance at the monthly sacrament, by the use of many of the church prayers in their private meetings, by their setting up public prayers in many of the city churches, and by their humble deference to their respective ministers, without whose approbation no rule, prayer, or practice was allowed among them.

It is also noteworthy that great care was exercised in admitting persons to membership among them. It was required that those who were desirous of joining the society should furnish a testimony of their sense of spiritual things, and of their sincere intention to live a religious life ; and this testimony was often presented in writing.

At length, these associated societies of converted people took another step, and resolved to exert themselves to check the public and scandalous sins which were so rampant in the capital. At first, they scarcely knew how to act ; but, just at the time when the resolution was adopted, four or five gentlemen of the Church of England, well acquainted with the law, formed a similar resolution, and determined to do all they could, by legal authority, to chastise and suppress the impudent vices and impieties so prevalent among their fellow-citizens. The first step taken was to make an abstract of all the penal laws against vice and profanity, and to draw up prudential rules for the legal conviction of offenders. The next was to obtain, through Tillotson, in 1691, a letter from Queen Mary, requiring magistrates to act in such matters, and to enforce the laws. The Lord Mayor, the aldermen, and other magistrates of London consented ; and now copies of the abstract of penal laws, of the prudential rules that had been drawn up, of the queen's letter, and of the magistrates' answer, were sent all over the kingdom ; and blank warrants were deposited in divers places of the capital for the convenience of informers.

The *Athenian Oracle*, (vol. iii., p. 30,) tells us that the good and great men of the age prosecuted the affair with unheard-of vigour ; and many persons of quality met together to concert measures to help forward this crusade against the profanities of the city. A petty sessions was held once a-week in Bloomsbury

Court-house and Hick's Hall for the conviction of offenders; and another was about to be set up in Westminster.* Fit persons were appointed to districts all over the city and suburbs, to take informations and fill up warrants. The queen commanded military officers to put down wickedness and disorders among soldiers. To lessen and prevent debauchery, the time for holding Bartholomew Fair was to be diminished, &c.

All this created great excitement. A lawyer, in a coffee-house, publicly declared that the whole thing was a trick of the magistrates for the purpose of getting fees, and that he would give them £2000 for their emoluments during a single year. This, says the *Athenian Oracle*, was a scandalous untruth, for already one hundred and forty warrants had been granted for which not one farthing had been charged for fees; and things were being so well managed, that, though it was likely that ten thousand warrants would be granted during the next twelve months, it would not be in the power of the officers levying the penalties to make the least profit by their legal prosecutions.

This royal, and almost national movement, could not have been more opportune. The religious societies had resolved to make an attempt to suppress and to punish vice, but scarce knew how to act; just at this juncture the steps were taken above recited, and now the way was open. Accordingly, the societies met together and prepared for action, by adopting the five following rules, which, in the prosecution of their work, were to be religiously observed:—

1. Christian poverty of spirit, to be cultivated by a deep sense of their own impurity and imperfection.

2. A disinterested mind, wholly renouncing all carnal ends.

3. Habitual prayer to God, with a courageous and unwearied pursuit of such things as are agreeable to His will, and subservient to His glory.

4. Unfeigned charity towards all men, especially to their souls.

5. Quiet resignation to the Providence of God in all events.

The societies now began their work, having really become the Society for the Reformation of Manners. One section of the members were appointed to act in London, and another section to

* This article was written about 1691, and probably by Samuel Wesley.

act in Westminster. Prompt information was given to the magistrates of all the debaucheries and profanities they witnessed; and not a few were the reproaches and threats they met with from evil-doers.

Very soon these converted people, belonging to the religious societies, were joined by an association of housekeepers in the Tower Hamlets, who, for their own protection, had banded themselves together to put an end to the thieving and lewdness that abounded in that neighbourhood.* The results were—several Sunday markets were abolished; some hundreds of brothels were shut up; music halls, which had degenerated into nurseries of licentiousness, were closed; multitudes of swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and drunkards, were legally convicted; and above two thousand prostitutes, night-walkers, and keepers of houses of ill-fame, were sentenced by the magistrates as the law directed; many of them being punished by fines, others by imprisonment, others by a suppression of their licences, and not a few by being publicly whipped at the cart's tail.

These were bold steps to take, but they were not unneeded. Daniel Defoe, writing at that period, has drawn a terrific picture of the age. The following are lines taken at random from his poems. There are others far too vivid to be reprinted:—

“K——’s a Dissenter, and severe of life,
Instructs his household and *corrects* his wife;
Lectures and sermons he attends by day,
But yet comes home at night too drunk to pray.

* We have before us a pamphlet with the following title:—“Proposals for a National Reformation of Manners, Humbly Offered to the Consideration of our Magistrates and Clergy. Published by the Society for Reformation. London: Printed for John Dunton, 1694.” In the preface it is stated, that “Atheism and Profaneness never got such an ascendancy as at this day. A thick gloominess hath overspread our horizon, and our light looks like the evening of the world.” After dwelling on the sins of the nation, it is recommended—1. “That there be a solemn fast, without any appearance of ornament among us, from the highest to the lowest.” 2. “That care be taken to establish justice and judgment unto the poor and needy, the destitute, and the oppressed.” 3. “That there be a yearly allowance for defraying the necessary expenses of carrying on this work of Reformation of Manners.” 4. “That the King and Queen be supplicated to suppress play-houses.” 5. “That great care be taken to put a difference between the clean and unclean in the visible Church, and not to admit all sorts of loose professors to the Holy Communion.”

"The country Justice may disturb the peace ;
The clergy drink and whore ; the gospel cease ;
The doctors cavil, and the priests contend,
And Convocation quarrels see no end.

"Superior lewdness crowns thy magistrates,
And vice, grown gray, usurps thy reverend seats ;
Eternal blasphemies and oaths abound,
And bribes among thy senators are found."

Woodward tells us that, in the music halls, it was not unusual for persons of both sexes to dance together in shameless nakedness ; and that, within a brief period, there had been above twenty murders committed in these licentious concert rooms.

Samuel Wesley's description of the morals of the city and of the nation is appalling. In the sermon which he preached before the Society for the Reformation of Manners, in 1698, he writes :—"Our infamous theatres seem to have done more mischief to the faith and morals of the nation than Hobbes himself. With as much reason may we exclaim against our plays and interludes as did the old zealous fathers against the pagan spectacles, and as justly rank these, as they did the others, among those pomps and vanities which our baptism obliges us to renounce and to abhor. What communion hath the temple of God with idols ?—with those abominable mysteries of iniquity, which outdo the old Fescenina of the heathen, the lewd orgies of Bacchus, and the impious feasts of Isis and Priapus ? I know not how any person can profitably, or indeed decently, present themselves here before God's holy oracle, who frequent those schools of vice, and mysteries of profaneness and lewdness, to unlearn *there* what they are taught *here* out of God's Holy Word. It is true the stage pretends to reform manners ; but let them tell us how many converts to virtue and religion they have made during the last thirty or forty years. We can give numerous and sad instances to the contrary. A brave and virtuous nation has been too generally depraved and corrupted, and nothing has more highly conduced to this than these insufferable and abominable representations at theatres. If oaths ; if blasphemy ; if perpetual profanation of the glorious name of God and of our blessed Redeemer ; if making a scoff and a laugh of His Holy Word and institutions ; if filthiness and foolish talking, and profane or immodest jesting ; if representing, excusing, and recommending the vices of mankind ; if teaching

the people to think virtue ridiculous, and religion fit for none but old people, fools, and lunatics ; if contempt of superiors ; if false notions of honour ; if lewdness, and pride, and revenge, and even murder ;—if these are the lessons which are daily taught in the public play-houses, to the disgrace of our age, corruption of our morals, and scandal of our nation, then we may fairly ask, Are these fit places for the education of our youth, and the diversion of those of riper years ? or, indeed, are they fit places to be tolerated under a Christian government ?”*

Mr Wesley continues :—“ Alas ! what reason has every one, who has any real concern for God and for his country, to cry out with the father of old, ‘ To what dregs of time are we reserved ! ’ Men may almost print or speak what blasphemies they please with impunity, and even with triumph. Too many of the subordinate magistrates will not act, nor the people generally assist them in the punishment of evil-doers. It is reckoned a part of good breeding, or at least an argument of wit and spirit, to ridicule all that is sacred, and to profane the glorious and fearful name of God ; and it is regarded as the rudest and the most clownish thing in the world to reprove, to detect, and punish such offenders, though by the most legal, prudent, and advisable methods.”

The Society for the Reformation of Manners was of great service, but it was not perfect. Defoe, in his “ Poor Man’s Plea,” alleges that the laws against vicious practices were cobweb laws, which caught small flies, but which the great ones broke through. The Lord Mayor whipt about the poor beggars and a few bad women, and sent them to the House of Correction ; and some alehouse-keepers and vintners were fined for drawing drink on Sundays ; but the man, with a gold ring and gay clothes, might reel through the open streets, and no one noticed it. The lewdness, profaneness, and immorality of the gentry, which was the main cause of the general debauchery of the kingdom, were not at all touched by the laws as now executed.

These are distressing pictures ; and it is not surprising that the converted people, joined together in the religious societies instituted about 1677, should set themselves the task of suppressing such impieties, and thus give birth, about the year 1691, to the Society for the Reformation of Manners. To some extent, the two Societies were one, and yet they were distinct and separate.

* *Meth. Mag.*, 1814, p. 729.

The religious societies were instituted principally to promote religion among themselves; the Reformation Society to suppress public vice in others. The religious societies were altogether composed of members of the Church of England; the Reformation Society was composed of members of the Church of England, and of other churches as well.*

After the Society for the Reformation of Manners had existed about forty years, most of its original members were dead, and it became defunct, and, from about 1730 to 1757, no such society existed. At that time, and perhaps as the result of the Methodist societies being instituted in 1739, the old Society for Reformation of Manners was revived. The approbation of the Lord Mayor of London and of the Court of Aldermen was obtained; and thousands of books of instruction were printed, and were sent to constables and parish officers to remind them of their duty. In the beginning of 1758, the laws against immorality were again enforced, and the streets and fields swept of their notorious offenders. In five years, about ten thousand persons were brought to justice, principally for gambling, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, lewdness, and selling obscene prints.† Who will deny that John Wesley had much to do with the revival of this society, as his father, Samuel Wesley, had to do with its early institution.‡ The society, at the first, arose out of the religious societies then existing; and we are strongly of opinion that the revival of the society, after it had become defunct, arose out of the Methodist societies of 1739, and which bore an almost exact resemblance to the religious societies of 1677. At all events, we find John Wesley thoroughly identifying himself with the revived Reformation Society of 1757. In 1763, he preached before the Society in West Street Chapel, Seven Dials, taking, as already stated, the very text that his father took sixty-five years before.§ In 1764, he proposed to the London Leaders Meeting that they should

* Calamy says: "The foundation of the Society for Reformation of Manners was laid in 1692; and the Dissenters were, from the first, as ready to encourage and assist in it as any."—CALAMY'S *Life and Times*.

† See Wesley's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 145.

‡ The person who was the principal means of resuscitating the Society for the Reformation of Manners was W. Welsh; but John Wesley was a personal friend of W. Welsh, and probably gave him counsel and encouragement.—See Wesley's *Journal*, February 2, 1766.

§ Wesley's *Works*, vol. vi. p. 140.

have a congregational collection to assist to liquidate the heavy debt of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, though, at the very time, his own society debt in London was about £900.* And, in 1766, he dined with W. Welsh, the father of the revived society, and most feelingly laments that it has a second time ceased to exist. The immediate cause of this, was an action instituted against the society, in the King's Bench, which issued in a verdict with £300 damages. This verdict was obtained by the false swearing of a wretch whom the society afterwards convicted of wilful perjury. Still the death-blow to the Society was struck, and John Wesley writes: "They could never recover the expense of that suit. Lord, how long shall the ungodly triumph?"†

Such, then, was the origin, the object, and the history of the society before which Samuel Wesley preached, in St James's Church, Westminster, in 1698. He was still a young man, and the circumstance of him being selected to preach, shows the high estimation in which he was already held. The sermon is long, able, and earnest. "Daring and open wickedness," he writes, "is high treason against the Majesty of heaven; and are not all His liege subjects under the deepest obligations to oppose it? Who has courage, and constancy, and bravery, equal to so glorious an undertaking? Blessed be God! we have now the encouragement of superiors. The sword of justice no longer lies rusting and idle, but is drawn and furnished for the battle, and glitters against the enemies of God and of our country. Shall a wretched mortal, a worm of the same dust with ourselves, presume to affront my Father, my Patron, my Friend, my Benefactor, my Saviour, and shall I want courage, or honesty to oppose him, to detect him, and to bring him to that shame and punishment he so highly merits? Whom are we afraid of, that we forget the Lord our Maker? Let all the potsherds of the earth fall down together, and humble themselves before the King, the Lord of hosts, and let Him alone be exalted, whose glory is above the heavens, and who shakes the earth at His displeasure. Let us often read the lives of martyrs. Here were Christians indeed,—who trampled the world, subdued the flesh, and conquered the devil, following the great Captain of their salvation, as He himself led the way, with crimson banners, and garments rolled in blood; and shall we pretend to follow them, as

* Wesley's *Journal*, Nov. 4, 1764.

† Wesley's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 230, and vol. vi. p. 157.

they did Him, and yet be afraid of a few hard words or frowns from mistaken or evil men? Oh pity! pity! poor sinners, and pray to God to pity them, who want the sense and grace to pity themselves; but show your pity to them, not by a cruel fondness, but by a kind and wholesome severity. Why should we suffer them to tumble over a fatal precipice, for fear of disturbing or disobliging them, by pulling them back with some haste and violence? Go on, then, in the name of God. Remember the eyes of God, men, and angels, are upon you. Be sober, be vigilant. Forbid none from casting out devils, because he follows not with *you*. Be careful and humble, and all earth and hell can never hurt you. Be willing, be thankful to be accounted the filth and offscouring of the world; the disturbers of the public peace, by those who themselves notoriously break it. Think much of heaven—forget not death. Be constant at sacraments, and in prayer, public, domestic, and private. Neglect not to sing the high praises of God. Remember the poor, especially God's poor. Pity the afflicted, especially our dear brethren who now 'suffer for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus.' Oh the peace, the joy, the triumph, the exultation of mind which a good man possesses, when he reflects on any sufferings he undergoes for the cause of God, and for the cause of despised religion and virtue! He bids the world do its worst, for he has a reserve beyond it,—and knows who will receive him into everlasting habitations, and say unto him 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!'"

We have thus attempted to give an outline of the history of the Society for the Reformation of Manners; and extracts from Samuel Wesley's sermon, preached before it in 1698; but, before the chapter closes, a few words must be added in reference to the religious societies out of which the other society arose.

The religious societies, begun in 1677, continued to exist until after John Wesley had instituted his Methodist societies. Wesley's first society was formed at Oxford in 1729, and consisted of himself, his brother Charles, Mr Morgan, and Mr Kirkham, who spent some evenings every week, in unitedly reading the Greek Testament.* The second was formed at Savannah in 1736, where he met a select few in his own house after evening prayers, and read and conversed with them, and concluded the meetings with

* Wesley's Works, vol. viii. p. 334.

a psalm.* On his return to England, we find him attending the meetings of the old religious societies which were still existing. On Sunday, April 26, 1738, he "went to a *society* in Oxford, where, as his manner then was at *all societies*, after using a collect or two and the Lord's prayer, he expounded a chapter in the New Testament, and concluded with three or four more collects and a psalm."† In September of the same year, we find him attending and taking part in *society* meetings in Bear Yard, in Aldersgate Street, and in Gutter Lane, London.‡ On the 15th of November following, he expounded at three *societies* in Bristol.§ In April 1739, in Bristol, he began "expounding our Lord's Sermon on the Mount to a little *society*, which was accustomed to meet once or twice a week in Nicholas Street;"|| and later on, in the same month, and in the same city, while "at a little *society* in the Back Lane, the floor of the room gave way, and fell down with a great noise."¶ In June 1739, he "went to a *society* at Wapping, where many began to call upon God with strong cries and tears."** On September 9th, he "went to a *society* at Fetter Lane, and exhorted them to love one another;"†† and two or three weeks afterwards "went as usual to the *society* at St James's;" and also to a *society* at Deptford.‡‡ In April, 1740, we find him at "a little *society* at Islington, which had stood untainted from the beginning;"§§ and in the month of May following, he met with the "members of a religious *society* at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which had subsisted for many years, had a fine library, and to whom their steward read a sermon every Sunday."|||

All this affords ample proof that the old religious societies, begun in 1677, still existed; and there cannot be a doubt that it was a knowledge of their usefulness that led John Wesley to institute his united societies in 1739. He tells us that, about that time, persons who had been awakened to a sense of their sin and danger, by the preaching of himself and his brother Charles, came to them for religious counsel and consolation. He writes:—"We advised them: 'Strengthen you one another—talk together as often as you can, and pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may endure to the end, and be saved.' They replied, 'But we

* Wesley's Works, vol. i. p. 40.

‡ Ibid., p. 149.

¶ Ibid., p. 176.

‡‡ Ibid., p. 214.

§ Ibid., p. 153.

** Ibid., p. 192.

§§ Ibid., p. 254.

† Ibid., vol. i. p. 84.

|| Ibid., p. 174.

†† Ibid., p. 211.

||| Ibid., p. 351.

want you likewise to talk with us.' So I told them, 'If you will all of you come together every Thursday evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer, and give you the best advice I can.' Thus," he adds, "arose what was afterwards called a *society*; a very innocent name, and very common in London, for any number of people associating themselves together. They united themselves in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they might help each other to work out their salvation."* A few days after this society was formed, some of the members expressed a determination to make a quarterly subscription to assist Wesley to pay for the lease of the Foundry, and a steward was appointed to receive the money;† and very soon after that, the society was divided into smaller companies called "classes," consisting of about twelve persons each, and one of whom was styled "the leader."‡

Such is John Wesley's own account of the rise of his "United Societies." In all this, we see an exact repetition of what was done by Beveridge, Horneck, and Smithies sixty-two years before. The religious societies instituted by them were the pioneers of the Methodist societies, and prepared their way. Their origin and number indicate the existence of a large amount of experimental and earnest piety, even in the midst of abounding wickedness. They were immensely useful, and were the means of conferring great benefits both upon the members themselves and upon others. They were instrumental in beginning and establishing about one hundred schools in London and its suburbs, in which thousands of poor children were taught gratuitously, and were carefully educated in good manners. Their rules required, that every member should be a member of the Church of England; that the members should meet together once a week to encourage each other in practical holiness; that all controversial and political discussions should be avoided at their meetings; that every member should give a weekly contribution towards the public stock for pious and charitable uses; that every one absenting himself from four meetings in succession, without just cause, should be looked upon as disaffected to the society; that none should be admitted as new members without due

* Wesley's Works, vol. viii. p. 240.

† Ibid. p. 239.

‡ Ibid., p. 259.

notice, and without inquiry concerning their religious purposes and manner of life; and that all the members should pray many times every day, receive the Lord's Supper at least once a month, keep a monthly fast, and pray for the whole society in their private devotions.

We have seen John Wesley's connexion with these societies. What about his father? Was he acquainted with them, and did he give them his approbation and sympathy? Happily these are questions which can be answered. "A Letter concerning the Religious Societies," was published by Samuel Wesley in 1699. After giving a description of the societies, Mr Wesley proceeds to argue that, so far from being any injury to the Church of England, they would greatly promote its interests. He expresses a wish that such societies might be formed in all considerable towns, and even in populous villages. He writes—"There are a great many parishes in this kingdom which consist of several thousands of souls. Now what one man, or two, or three, is sufficient for such a multitude? Those who have but one or two thousand will find their cares heavy enough, especially now they have neither the catechists of the ancients to assist them, nor those clerks which are mentioned in the rubric." He then goes on to state, that, in such cases, the religious societies would be of immense service. Acting under the authority and direction of the clergy, "they would be as so many churchwardens, or overseers, or almost deacons under them; caring for the sick and poor, giving an account of the spiritual estate of themselves and others, persuading parents to catechise their children and to fit them for confirmation, and discoursing with those who have left the church to bring them back to it. This assistance would conduce as much to the health of the minister's body, by easing him of many a weary step and fruitless journey, as it would conduce to the satisfaction of his mind, in the visible success of his labours. Such societies, so far from injuring the Church, would be so many new bulwarks against its enemies, and would give it daily more strength, and beauty, and reputation."

He then proceeds to show that the institution of such societies was not a novelty; that the Church of Rome was indebted for most of the progress that it had made in recent times to the several societies it had nourished in its bosom; and that the Marquis de Renty in France had formed, as early as 1640, many

societies of devout persons, who, in their weekly meetings, consulted about the relief of the poor, engaged in united prayer, sang psalms, read books of devotion, and discoursed together of their own spiritual concerns.

Wesley then argues that such societies are really necessary, on the ground, that, without them, the members of the Church have no opportunity for that "delightful employment of all good Christians," pious conversation. He concludes thus:—"The design of these societies is not to gather churches out of churches, to foment new schisms and divisions, and to make heathens of all the rest of their Christian brethren; but to promote, in a regular manner, that which is the end of every Christian, the glory of God, included in the welfare and salvation of themselves and their neighbours. It cannot be denied that there may and will be some persons in these societies of more heat than light, of more zeal than judgment; but where was ever any body of men without some such characters? But since the very rules of their institution do strictly oblige them to the practice of humility and charity, and to avoid censoriousness and spiritual pride, the common rocks of those who make a more than ordinary profession of religion, I see not what human prudence can provide any farther in this matter."

These extracts are important, inasmuch as they afford ample evidence that Samuel Wesley (the High Churchman, as Mr Watson and others erroneously call him) was as much in favour of Christian fellowship, such as Methodists now hold in classes, as was the founder of the Methodists himself; and they also further prove that, when John Wesley employed lay agents to assist himself and his brother, and to promote the glory of God in the salvation of men, he did nothing more than what had been earnestly advocated and recommended by his father nearly half a century before. In employing lay-agents, John Wesley was a-head of his age; but he only did what his father had urged to be done in 1699, and what the Church of England itself, at this present moment, is wishing to have accomplished—viz., the employment of a Sub-Diaconate to co-operate with the regular ministry.

CHAPTER XII.

DEBT AND DILIGENCE—1700-1704.

WHEN Mr Wesley removed to Epworth he turned farmer, and took the management of his tithes into his own hands. The rector's domestic necessities were increasing every year, and it was natural that he should wish to make his glebe as profitable as he could. To commence farming, however, was a serious mistake. First of all, Mr Wesley was without capital to begin; and to attempt to farm without capital, or to borrow capital and pay large interest for it, is not the way for a poor man's prospects to be made better; and then, in the second place, the great and the good-hearted rector, notwithstanding his genius, his learning, and his diligence, seems to have had no aptitude for business. "He is not fit for worldly business," wrote his brother-in-law Samuel Annesley, who had employed him to transact some of his affairs in England, whilst he was absent in India; to which his wife, Susannah Wesley, answered:—"This I assent to, and must own I was mistaken when I thought him fit for business. My own experience hath since convinced me that he is one of those who, our Saviour saith, are not so wise in their generation as the children of this world."

The good man had no knowledge of the farming business; he had no money to begin it; and, to say the least, his ardent love of books, and his long-established literary habits, were not friendly to it. It was a great mistake for the learned and studious rector to turn farmer, and no wonder that such a step led to debt and serious embarrassment. Perhaps this is the most fitting place to introduce the letters following, all of which were written to Archbishop Sharpe:—

EPWORTH, Dec. 30, 1700.

"MY LORD,—I have lived on the thought of your Grace's gener-

ous offer ever since I was at Bishopthorpe, and the hope I have of seeing some end, or at least mitigation, of my troubles, makes me pass through them with much more ease than I should otherwise have done. I can now make a shift to be dunned, with some patience; and to be affronted, because I want the virtue of riches, by those who scarce think there is any other virtue.

"I must own, I was ashamed, when at Bishopthorpe, to confess that I was £300 in debt, when I have a living of which I have made £200 per annum, though I could hardly let it now for eightscore.

"I doubt not but one reason of my being sunk so far is my not understanding worldly affairs, and my aversion to law, which my people have always known but too well. But, I think, I can give a tolerable account of my affairs, and satisfy any equal judge that a better husband than myself might have been in debt, though perhaps not so deeply, had he been in the same circumstances, and met with the same misfortunes.

"Twill be no great wonder that, when I had but £50 per annum for six or seven years together, nothing to begin the world with, one child at least per annum, and my wife sick for half the time, that I should run £150 behindhand, especially when about £100 of it had been expended in goods, without doors and within.

"When I had the rectory of Epworth given me, my Lord of Sarum was so generous as to pass his word to his goldsmith* for £100, which I borrowed of him. It cost me very little less than £50 of this in my journey to London, and in getting into my living, for the Broad Seal, &c.; and with the other £50 I stopped the mouths of my most importunate creditors.

"When I removed to Epworth, I was forced to take up £33-£50 more, for setting up a little husbandry, when I took the tithes into my own hand, and for buying some part of what was necessary towards furnishing my house, which was larger, as well as more my family, than what I had on the other side of the country.

"The next year my barn fell, which cost me £40 in rebuilding; and, having an aged mother, (thanks to your Grace for part of it;) and, having an aged mother, who must have gone to prison if I had not assisted her, she cost me upwards of £40 more, which obliged me to take up another £50. I have had but three children born since I came hither, about three years since; but another is coming, and my wife is

* Meaning his banker.

incapable of any business in my family, as she has been for almost a quarter of a year; yet we have but one maid-servant, in order to retrench all possible expenses.

"My first-fruits came to about £28; my tenths are near £3 per annum. I pay a yearly pension of £3, out of my rectory, to John of Jerusalem. My taxes came to upwards of £20 per annum, but they are now retrenched to about half. My collection to the poor comes to £5 per annum; besides which, they have lately bestowed an apprentice upon me, whom, I suppose, I must teach to beat rhyme. Ten pounds a year I allow my mother, to help to keep her from starving. I wish I could give as good an account for some charities, which I am now satisfied have been imprudent, considering my circumstances.

"Fifty pounds interest and principal I have paid my Lord of Sarum's goldsmith. All which together keeps me necessitous, especially since interest-money begins to pinch me; and I am always called upon for money before I make it, and must buy everything at the worst hand; whereas, could I be so happy as to get on the right side of my income I should not fear, by God's help, to live honestly in the world, and to leave a little to my children after me. I think, as it is, I could perhaps work it out in time, in half a dozen or half a score years, if my heart should hold so long; but for that, God's will be done.

"Humbly asking pardon for this tedious trouble, I am, your Grace's most obliged and most humble servant,

"S. WESLEY."

This is a painfully interesting letter. A few explanations may be acceptable. He had been put to considerable expense "for the Broad Seal," the meaning of which is, that, as the Epworth living belonged to the Crown, his title to the gift of it required the affixing of the "Broad Seal," for which, of course, he had to pay the official fees. Then, he had to pay £28 for "first-fruits;" £3 for "tenths," and other £3 to "John of Jerusalem." The "first-fruits" were a sort of fine levied on a clergyman's first year's income, when he had the good fortune to be promoted, the money being paid to the Government. The "tenths" were a tax paid to the Crown every year. The £3 paid to John of Jerusalem was an impost of the same description. Down to a certain period, a number of churches in England were obliged to pay toll to the Priory of St

John of Jerusalem ; but, at the suppression of the monasteries, all the emoluments of this priory were given to the king, and, as the rectory of Epworth had been accustomed to pay to the value of £3 per annum to that house, this was the sum which the kings of England continued to receive from Epworth rectory.

He had been obliged to take a parish apprentice. At that period, and for a long time after, it was customary for parochial officers to relieve themselves, of the burden of maintaining the children of their paupers, by compelling the parishioners, in rotation, to take such children as apprentices, and to teach them their respective trades. One of these youngsters had been forced upon the poor rector, and, as he had no trade to teach him, he playfully proposes to instruct him in the unprofitable business of making poetry, to which he himself had been so long addicted.

His aged mother was still living, but was crushed with poverty, and had been in danger of imprisonment for debt. For about thirty years she had been a lonely widow, and seems to have been dependent upon her son Samuel's £10 per annum for her daily bread. The question naturally occurs, Was the poor rector the only one willing to assist his mother? Was nothing done for her by her son Matthew? Matthew rose to considerable eminence in the medical profession, and had an extensive and profitable practice in London. Thirty years after the period of which we are now writing, when he visited the Epworth family, he is represented as a man of wealth, and yet where is the evidence that he helped to support his mother? Matthew Wesley is described by his niece Mehetabel as one of the gentlest of human beings, and as rescuing thousands from the grave by his healing skill. He was of sufficient eminence to have his death celebrated in the poetical department of the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1737 ; but, excepting a little kindness shown to one or two of his brother's children, we are left without evidence that he possessed any of that nobility of heart, which prompted the embarrassed rector to squeeze out of his scanty income the pittance which he yearly gave to his much-loved mother.

Samuel Wesley's attachment to the Established Church was conscientious and strong; otherwise there was enough in his mother's history to have made him its enemy for ever. By the relentless and intolerant bigotry of that Church, her husband had been de-

prived of the means of sustaining his family, and had been persecuted and driven from place to place, and not allowed the opportunity of providing for either his wife or his children. By the same Church's intolerance, he had been brought to an untimely grave; and his widow, for long, long years, had been struggling with abject poverty. Her son Samuel knew all this; and yet, notwithstanding his having been trained for the Dissenting ministry, he entered the very Church which had inflicted so much misery upon his father, and which, to the day of her death, made Dr Thomas Fuller's niece, Samuel Wesley's mother, a needy object of charity and alms. Nothing but conscientious conviction of duty, could have induced such a man to attach himself to such a Church.

Samuel Wesley was most distressingly embarrassed; but his embarrassments were not the results of wasteful or extravagant living. For about eleven years he had been a married minister of the Church of England. His professional income, for that entire period—after deducting the payments mentioned in the foregoing letter, for furniture, the Broad Seal, his first-fruits, his tenths and other taxes, the poor, his mother's debt, and also including the £50 borrowed for farming purposes—did not amount to more than £600, which gives an average of £54, 10s. a-year, or twenty shillings and ninepence per week. Out of that amount of money, he had to maintain house, to find food and clothes for himself and for his wife; he had to meet the expenses connected with the birth of ten children, and the burial of five; and he had now a family to support, consisting of himself, his wife, five children, a maid-servant, and a parish apprentice—nine persons altogether. Samuel Wesley, after eleven years of hard struggling, was £300 in debt. No wonder! Let the reader look at the preceding figures and facts, and his surprise will be, not that the debt was so great, but that it was not greater. Many Methodists have a vague idea that the rector of Epworth was careless and improvident in the management of his pecuniary matters, and that this was the cause of his embarrassments; but to entertain such a thought is a cruel injustice done to the character of that distinguished man, and also an undeserved stigma cast upon the reputation of his invaluable wife. Let any one think of a clergyman of the Church of England having to maintain a large, and often an afflicted family, for eleven years, at the rate of two shillings and elevenpence-halfpenny per day, and we challenge him to deny that Samuel

Wesley, now £300 in debt, was deserving, not of censure, but of sympathy.

Archbishop Sharpe, to whom Wesley's letter was addressed, was an exceedingly kind and faithful friend. He submitted the painful circumstances of the poor rector to a number of his noble friends, some of whom generously responded, the Countess of Northampton sending him £20. The archbishop also wished to make an application to the House of Lords for what was technically called a "Brief;" in other words, a "letter patent, granting a licence for collecting money to rebuild churches, to restore loss by fire," &c. These "briefs," or letters patent were read in churches, and the sums collected were endorsed on them, with the signatures of the minister and churchwarden; after which the briefs and the money collected were delivered to the person or persons obtaining the briefs, who in their turn had to give an account, within two months, of the moneys received, before a master in Chancery appointed by the Lord Chancellor.

The proposal, then, of the Archbishop of York was, to obtain from Parliament one of these letters patent, authorising and commanding collections to be made in certain churches, for the purpose of relieving the distresses of the rector of Epworth. The feeling which prompted this was unquestionably kind, but perhaps it was scarce considerate. To a high-minded and sensitive man like Samuel Wesley, it could not be otherwise than disagreeable to have his domestic troubles and financial embarrassments paraded, first before Parliament, and afterwards in parish churches, for the purpose of obtaining collections to pay some £300 of debt, and perhaps to furnish a trifling surplus to repair Epworth parsonage, and to improve Epworth parish church. At the present day, such a mode of raising money for such purposes would be universally denounced; and in the case of Samuel Wesley, one hundred and sixty-five years ago, such a plan ought never to have been propounded. It was doubtless a duty to assist the impoverished parson, but the assistance ought to have been, not public, but private. Dr Clarke asserts that the archbishop actually applied to the Upper House of Parliament for such a brief. Be that as it may, we find Samuel Wesley disapproving of the proposal in the following letter, which was written four months and a half after his former one:—

“EFWORTH, May 14, 1701.

“MY LORD,—In the first place, I do, as I am bound, heartily thank God for raising me so great and generous a benefactor as your Grace, when I so little expected or deserved it.

“And then, to return my poor thanks to your lordship, though but a sorry acknowledgment, yet all I have, for the pains and trouble you have taken on my account. I most humbly thank your Grace that you did not close with the motion which you mentioned in your Grace’s first letter ; for I should rather chose to remain all my life in my present circumstances, than so much as consent that your lordship should do any such thing. Nor, indeed, should I be willing on my own account to trouble the House of Lords in the method proposed, for I believe *mine* would be the first instance of a *brief for losses by child-bearing* that ever came before that honourable house.

“Had your Grace been able to have effected nothing for me, the generosity and goodness had been the same ; and I should have prayed for as great a heap of blessings on your Grace and your family. This is all I can do now, when I have such considerable assistance by your Grace’s charitable endeavours. When I received your Grace’s first letter, I thanked God upon my knees for it. I have done the same, I believe, twenty times since, as often as I have read it ; and more than once for the other, which I received but yesterday.

“Certainly, never did an archbishop of England write in such a manner to an isle poet ; but it is peculiar to your Grace to oblige so as none besides can do it. I know your Grace will be angry, but I cannot help it ; truth will out, though in a plain and rough dress ; and I should sin against God if I now neglected to make all the poor acknowledgments I am able.”

He then proceeds to mention the great kindness of the Countess of Northampton, and says he must divide what she has given him,—“half to my poor mother, with whom I am now above a year behindhand ; the other £10 for my own family. My mother will wait on your Grace for her £10 : she knows not the particulars of my circumstances, which I keep from her as much as I can, that they may not trouble her.”

Very beautiful are sentiments like these ; and great must have been the anguish of that sensitive and noble heart that had to struggle with such adversities.

Four days after the foregoing letter was written, it was followed by another and shorter one, strikingly characteristic of the playfulness as well as gratitude of the writer's nature :—

“ EPWORTH, *May 18, 1701.*

“ MY LORD,—This comes as a rider to the last, by the same post, to bring such news as, I presume, will not be unwelcome to a person who has so particular a concern for me. Last night my wife brought me a *few* children. There are but *two* yet, a boy and a girl, and I think they are all at present. We have had four in two years and a day, three of which are living.

“ Never came anything more like a gift from Heaven than what the Countess of Northampton sent by your lordship's charitable offices. Wednesday evening my wife and I clubbed and joined stocks, which came but to *six shillings*, to send for coals. Thursday morning I received the £10 ; and at night my wife was delivered. Glory be to God for His unspeakable goodness !—I am, your Grace's most obliged, and most humble servant,

“ S. WESLEY.”

Archbishop Sharpe, to whom these three letters were addressed, was born at Bradford, Yorkshire, in 1644. He was educated at Christ College, Cambridge, and for five years was private tutor to the four sons of Sir Heneage Finch, who afterwards became Lord Chancellor. In 1677, Sharpe became rector of St Giles's, and had among his parishioners the celebrated Richard Baxter, who was a constant hearer of the rector every Sunday morning, and was consulted about his marriage. These two excellent men, notwithstanding their minor differences, lived together on the most friendly terms. In 1681, Sharpe was promoted to the deanery of Norwich. On the accession of King James, he preached so much against Popery, that he excited the royal displeasure, was obliged to leave St Giles's, and to reside altogether at his deanery. In 1689, he succeeded Tillotson as Dean of Canterbury, and was nominated one of the commissioners for revising the liturgy. In 1691, he was consecrated Archbishop of York, and discharged the duties of his high office with great fidelity until his death, which occurred at Bath in 1714. He preached repeatedly before King William and Queen Mary. Some of these sermons are now before us, and display great ability and earnest piety. H

delivered the sermon preached at the coronation of Queen Anne. His favourite studies, in his youthful days, were botany and chemistry. He was chaplain to King Charles and to King James. He was greatly esteemed by King William, and, in the reign of Queen Anne, the greatest attention was always paid to his advices. Dr Sharpe, says Bishop Burnet, was a very pious man, and one of the most popular preachers of the age. Sharpe left behind him seven volumes of sermons.* He was the grandfather of the celebrated Granville Sharpe, the distinguished philanthropist and the friend of slaves. A remarkable anecdote of the archbishop was inserted by John Wesley in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1785.

In the midst of all his pecuniary struggles, Samuel Wesley continued to write and to publish books. In 1700, he issued a small volume, entitled "The Pious Communicant Rightly Prepared ; or, A Discourse concerning the Blessed Sacrament : wherein the nature of it is described, our obligation to frequent communion enforced, and directions given for due preparation for it, behaviour at and after it, and profiting by it. With Prayers and Hymns suited to the several parts of that Holy Office. To which is added, A Short Discourse of Baptism. By Samuel Wesley, A.M., Chaplain to the Most Honourable John, Lord Marquis of Normanby, and Rector of Epworth, in the diocese of Lincoln. London : Printed for Charles Harper. 1700."

This long title almost renders a description of the book unnecessary. The book, however, besides what is described in the title-page, contains as an appendix the "Letter concerning the Religious Societies," from which quotations have been already made, and altogether consists of two hundred and ninety-three pages 12mo. A few extracts may be useful, as illustrating the writer's opinions, and his mode of expressing them.

Speaking of the doctrine of transubstantiation, he says :—"It overthrows the very nature of a sacrament, and leaves nothing for an outward sign ; it introduces the most monstrous absurdities, which, if granted, would render the Christian religion the most absurd and most unreasonable in the world ; it involves the most horrid, as well as most ridiculous consequences, such as that our Saviour did eat His own body, and gave it to His disciples to eat ; it makes Christians the worst cannibals to eat their God a thou-

* Newcombe's *Life of Sharpe*.

sand times over; and it contradicts the very nature of a body, which cannot be in two places at the same time, much less in earth and in heaven," (p. 19 and 20.)

On the subject of baptism, he writes:—"In baptism, we are so far regenerate as to be grafted into the body of Christ's Church, and to partake of its privileges by the operation of His Holy Spirit within us, who will never be wanting to us or forsake us, unless we ourselves put a bar to the divine assistance by confirmed evil habits, and by a wicked life. But since the divine image, which we there recovered, is very often obscured again by the temptations of the world and the devil, and the remains of sin within us, there is need enough for our being renewed again by repentance; nor has God here left us without hope or comfort, but has appointed a remedy even for those who sin after baptism, and that is this other sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, wherein we renew our covenant with Him, and receive new strength to obey His commands," (p. 37.)

In another place he writes:—"We say not that regeneration is always *completed* in baptism, but that it is begun in it; a principle of grace is infused, which we lost by the fall, which shall never be wholly withdrawn, unless we quench God's Holy Spirit by obstinate habits of wickedness. There are *babes* as well as *strong men* in Christ," (p. 205.)

The same view of baptism was substantially held by his son John. The latter, in his sermon on the New Birth, observes:—"It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are, at the same time, born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years." *

It is no part of our task either to justify or condemn these opinions; but, perhaps, the following extract from an article, probably written by Samuel Wesley, and inserted in the *Athenian Oracle*, (vol. i., p. 457,) may with some find more favour, though there is nothing in it antagonistic to the other opinions of Samuel Wesley already given.

"Baptism is called by the apostle 'the laver of regeneration,'

* Wesley's Works, vol. vi. p. 69.

and accordingly our Church, not only lawfully, but commendably, uses the word regeneration for baptism; and, in the offices for that sacrament, more than once mentions the child's being regenerate, which it explains by its being grafted into the body of Christ's Church, and so admitted into the communion of saints. Children have then a federal holiness as children of believing parents; and, as the first-born among the Jews were dedicate, devoted, or holy in the Lord, so in that sense children of believing parents are holy—in that sense they are regenerate."

It is a remarkable fact, not generally known, that John Wesley's "Treatise on Baptism," published in the tenth volume of his collected works, and dated November 11, 1756, is nothing less or more than his father's "Short Discourse of Baptism," published fifty-six years before. It is true that the son has very *slightly* abridged and verbally altered his father's essay, but that is all. He thus makes all the opinions of his father, on baptism, his own; but it is somewhat strange that he should republish the treatise without the least reference to its original author. It is hardly fair that the treatise should be published as his own. In more respects than one, John Wesley was a courageous man.

In the same year in which Samuel Wesley published his "Pious Communicant," he also gave to the public a poem, entitled, "An Epistle to a Friend concerning Poetry, by Samuel Wesley. London: Printed for Charles Harper, 1700." The poem is a folio of thirty pages, and consists of 1083 lines.

The preface is an earnest—almost furious—production, stating his design, and dwelling on the strong tendency to infidel principles evinced by some of the chief literary men then living. He writes:—"The direct design of a great part of this poem is to serve the cause of religion and virtue. My quarrel is with those that rank themselves among atheists, and impudently defend and propagate the ridiculous opinion of the eternity of the world, and of that fatal, invincible chain of things which is now made use of to destroy the faith, as our lewd plays are to corrupt the morals, of the nation;—an opinion big with more absurdities than transubstantiation itself, and of far more fatal consequences. Besides **wakening**, if not destroying, the belief of the being and providence of God, it utterly takes away freedom in human actions, reduces mankind beneath the brute creation, perfectly excuses the **greatest** villainies, and entirely vacates all retribution hereafter.

One would wonder with what face or conscience such a set of men should hope to be treated by the rules of civility, when they themselves break through those of common humanity. How can they expect any fairer quarter than wolves or tigers; or, what reason can they give why a price should not be set upon their heads as well as on the others; or, at least, why they should not be securely hampered and muzzled, and led about for a sight like other monsters? It is the fatal and spreading poison of these men's principles and example which has extorted these warm expressions from me. I cannot with patience see my country ruined by the prodigious increase of infidelity and immorality, nor forbear crying out, with some vehemence, when it is in greater and more imminent danger than it would have been formerly if the Spanish Armada had made a descent among us. If things go on as they now are, we are in a fair way to become a nation of atheists. It is now no difficult matter to meet with those who pretend to be lewd on principle. They attack religion in form, and batter it from every quarter; they would turn the very Scriptures against themselves, and labour hard to remove a Supreme Being out of the world; or, if they do vouchsafe Him any room in it, it is only that they may find fault with His works, which they think, with that blasphemer of old, might have been much better ordered had they themselves stood by and directed the architect.

"What would these men have? Why cannot they be content to sink single into the bottomless pit without dragging so much company with them? Can they grapple with Omnipotence? Can they thunder with a voice like God, and cast abroad the rage of their wrath? Could they annihilate hell they might be tolerably happy, more quietly rake through the world, and sink into nothing.

"There is too great reason to apprehend that this infection is spread among persons of almost all ranks, though some may think it decent still to keep on a religious masque. This is hypocrisy with a witness, the basest and meanest of vices. The cowards will not believe a God, because they dare not; for woe be to them if there be one, and consequently any future punishment! From such as these I desire no favour, but that of their ill word; as their crimes must expect none from me. If I could be ambitious of a name in the world, it should be that I might sacrifice it in so glorious a cause as that of religion and virtue. If none but

generals must fight in this sacred war, when there are such infernal hosts on the other side, they could never prevail without one of the ancient miracles. If little people can but discharge the place of a private sentinel, it is all that is expected from us. I hope I shall never let the enemies of God and my country come on without firing, though it serve but to give the alarm; and, if I die without quitting my post, I desire no greater glory. I have no personal pique against any whose characters I may have given in this poem, nor think the worse of them for their thoughts of me. I hope I have everywhere done them justice, and have given them commendation where they merit it."

This is strong language respecting the chief writers of the day; but it was not unneeded. It is true, that, there were honourable exceptions—such as Addison, who was now enjoying his pension of £300 a year for his complimentary poem on one of the campaigns of King William; Sir Richard Steele, who was writing his "Christian Hero;" Dean Swift, who, having published his poetical essays, was now pondering his "Tale of a Tub;" Pope, who, as a boy twelve years old, was writing, in Windsor Forest, his "Ode on Solitude;" Parnell, who was just made M.A., and ordained a deacon; and Edward Young, who was now completing the first part of his education at Winchester. Of these and others we say nothing; but contemporaneous with them were William Wycherley, who attacked vice, it is true, but attacked it with the severity of a cynic, and the language of a libertine; Matthew Prior, who, notwithstanding his poetic fame, cohabited with a despicable drab of the lowest kind; William Congreve, "the ultimate effect of whose plays," says Dr Johnson, "is to represent pleasure in alliance with vice, and to relax those obligations by which life ought to be regulated;" Lord Bolingbroke, whom Johnson designated "a scoundrel, who charged a pop-gun against Christianity; and a coward, who left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman (David Mallet) to fire it off;" Anthony Collins, the infidel, who, notwithstanding his abilities as a writer, was detected in so many instances of false quotations, and other unfair modes of controversy, that he must ever be regarded as one of the most flagrant instances of literary disingenuousness; Matthew Tindall, some of whose infidel productions were, by a vote of the House of Commons, ordered to be burned by the common hangman; John Toland, the "miserable sophist," as

Swift calls him, whose sceptical writings were ordered to be burned by the Irish Parliament, and who discussed the mysteries of Christianity in coffee-houses and other public places, until at last he wanted a meal of meat, and fell to borrowing a few pence from any one that would lend to him; and John Dryden, with his sometimes Popish, and sometimes latitudinarian creed—a man of splendid talents, but whose writings, while flashing with the highest genius, are often soaked and loathsome with the foulest vice.

Macaulay, in reference to a period a few years earlier, writes:—"The profligacy of the English plays, satires, songs, and novels of that age is a deep blot on our national fame. The evil may easily be traced to its source. The wits and the Puritans had never been on friendly terms. From the Reformation to the civil war, almost every writer had taken some opportunity of assailing the straight-haired, snuffling, whining saints, who christened their children out of the Book of Nehemiah, who groaned in the spirit at the sight of Jack in the Green, and who thought it impious to taste plum-porridge on Christmas-day. At length a time came when the laughers began to look grave in their turn. The rigid, ungainly zealots, after having furnished much good sport during two generations, rose up in arms, conquered, ruled, and, grimly smiling, trod down under their feet the whole crowd of mockers. At the Restoration the old fight recommenced, and the war between wit and Puritanism soon became a war between wit and morality. Whatever the canting Roundhead had regarded with reverence was insulted; whatever he had proscribed, was favoured. As he never opened his mouth except in Scriptural phrase, the new breed of wits and fine gentlemen never opened theirs without uttering ribaldry of which a porter would now be ashamed. It is not strange, therefore, that our polite literature, when it revived with the old civil and ecclesiastical polity, should have been profoundly immoral. A few eminent men, who belonged to an earlier and better age, were exempt from the general contagion. The verse of Waller still breathed the sentiments which had animated a more chivalrous generation. Cowley, distinguished as a loyalist and as a man of letters, raised his voice courageously against the immorality which disgraced both letters and loyalty. A mightier poet, tried at once by pain, danger, poverty, obloquy, and blindness, meditated, undisturbed by the obscene tumult

which raged all around him, a song so sublime and so holy that it would not have misbecome the lips of those etherial virtues whom he saw, with that inner eye which no calamity could darken, flinging down on the jasper pavement their crowns of amaranth and gold. But these were men whose minds had been trained in a world which had passed away. They gave place to a younger generation of wits; and of that generation, from Dryden down to D'Urfey, the common characteristic was hard-hearted, shameless, swaggering licentiousness, at once inelegant and inhuman."

Samuel Wesley's "Epistle concerning Poetry" is ingenious and able. The editor of Dr Adam Clarke's *Miscellaneous Works* observes: "Such a poem as this may be supposed to have suggested Lord Byron's 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.'" We would add, that perhaps it suggested a much earlier work, the "Dunciad" of Alexander Pope, which was first published in 1727, twenty-seven years after the publication of Wesley's "Epistle." At all events, both Pope and Byron would have acted better if, like Samuel Wesley, they had been guided by justice, instead of being goaded by spleen, and if their works, like his, had contained more of criticism and less of spite.

It is difficult, without giving extracts, to furnish a just idea of Mr Wesley's poem. The following are some of the topics that are taken up and sketched—viz., Genius, Wit, Judgment, Invention, Memory, Learning, Conversation, Style, Reading, Measure, Numbers, Pauses, Quantity, Rhyme, Epic poetry, Tragedy, the Ode, and Satire. In dwelling on these points, Wesley takes the opportunity of referring to the most popular writers of poetry to illustrate his meaning. Chaucer's lines are so rough and so unequal in their flow, that to describe their *measure* is impossible. Spencer, with his "vast genius" and "noble thoughts," is a master of English *quantity*; but his stanzas are cramped, and his *rhymes* affected by antique words. Dryden, with his "matchless skill," is highly praised; but, at the same time, Wesley charges him with having "made vice pleasing, and damnation shine;" and entreats him, after "sixty years of lewdness," to repent and seek God's forgiveness. Blackmore is eulogised by Wesley, at the time when all the wits were treating him with ridicule; for few excelled him in writing poetic fables, and each of his pages is "big with Virgil's manly thought." But, instead of giving quotations descriptive of men, we give the following, which, to say the least, is

thoughtful and ingenious. The reader will perceive that the lines are intended to be a description of the human head :—

“A cave there is, wherein those nymphs reside,
 Who all the realms of sense and fancy guide;
 Nay, some affirm, that in the deepest cell
 Imperial Reason's self does not disdain to dwell.
 With living reed it's thatch'd and guarded round,
 Which, moved by winds, emit a silver sound.
 Two crystal fountains near its entrance play,
 Wide scattering golden beams, which ne'er decay;
 Two labyrinths behind, harmonious sounds convey.
 Chiefly, within, the room of state is famed,
 Of rich Mosaic work divinely framed;
 Of small extent to view, 'twill all things hide;
 Heaven's azure arch itself not half so wide.
 Here all the arts their sacred mansion choose,
 Here dwells the mother of the heaven-born muse,
 With wondrous mystic figures round 'tis wrought,
 Inlaid with fancy and anneal'd with thought.
 What was, or is, or labours yet to be,
 Within the womb of dark futurity,
 May stowage in this wondrous storehouse find,
 Yet leave unnumber'd empty cells behind.
 Whate'er within this sacred hall you find,
 Let judgment sort, and skilful method bind;
 And as from these you draw your ancient store,
 Daily supply the magazine with more.”—(Page 3.)

No sooner was the “Epistle concerning Poetry” out of hand, than Samuel Wesley devoted himself to a much larger poetic work, entitled “The History of the Old and New Testament, attempted in Verse, and adorned with three hundred and thirty Sculptures. Written by S. Wesley, A.M.; the Cuts done by J. Sturt. London: Printed for C. Harper.”

Dr Clarke says the first edition of this work was published in 1701; but the earliest edition with which the writer is acquainted was published in 1704, and is in three volumes, of about three hundred and fifty pages each. Another edition was published in 1717, and was dedicated to “the Most Honourable the Lady Marchioness of Normanby;”—a lady “ennobled by birth, beauty, and fortune, but more by piety and virtue.”

In his preface to the reader, he says: “I have but little to say concerning this small present which I here make thee. It is some account of the intervals of my time, which I wish had never been worse employed. There are some passages here represented which

are so barren of circumstances, that it was not easy to make them shine in verse; though they could not be well omitted without breaking the thread of the history. But there are others where I have more liberty, wherein it is my own fault if I have not succeeded better. On the whole, if aught that is here may be useful to any good Christian, and tend to promote piety, I shall be better pleased than if I could have composed a book on any other subject worthy to be dedicated in the Vatican; for I hope I am got on the right side of the world, and am as indifferent to it as it can be to me."

The engravings, or "Sculptures," as the rector calls them, are small, but full of genius. John Sturt, the artist, was born in 1658, and died in 1730. He is celebrated principally for the extraordinary minuteness and beauty of his engraved writing. He engraved the Lord's Prayer in the compass of a silver penny, and an Elegy on Queen Mary in so small a size that it might be set in a ring or locket. His most curious work, however, is the "Book of Common Prayer," which he engraved with marvellous neatness on one hundred and eighty-eight silver plates, in double columns. Prefixed is a portrait of King George I., the lines on the king's face being made by an inscription of the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, the Creed, the Prayers for the Royal Family, and the 21st Psalm, all in writing so minute as scarcely to be read with the aid of a microscope. This remarkable work was published by subscription in 1717; and about the same time another of his productions was similarly issued, "A Companion to the Altar," executed in the same ingenious manner. The poor artist, like the poor rector, was beset with poverty all his days. In his old age, he was offered an asylum in the Charter-House, but respectfully declined accepting it. Such was the man who engraved the "three hundred and thirty sculptures" which adorn and illustrate Samuel Wesley's "History of the Old and New Testaments."

This work of Wesley, like his Life of Christ, is permanently injured by the hastiness in which it was evidently written, and by the unfinished state of many of its lines; but, at the same time, it contains scores of passages worthy of Wesley's great genius. To enable the reader to form an opinion of the book's excellencies and faults, we subjoin a few random extracts, taking four from the Old Testament and four from the New.

After describing Moses and his flock at Horeb, Wesley writes:—

“As he the sylvan scene with pleasure views,
By gentle motion dress'd in various hues,
A hollow wind comes whispering through the leaves;
The solid rock with dire convulsions cleaves;
The largest bush, and fairer than the rest,
He saw in harmless flames, and lambent lightnings dress'd.
Though strange, though wondrous strange the sight appear,
He to the burning bush approaches near;
When from the flames a voice like thunder broke,
And Moses in these awful words bespoke:
‘Thy sandals quickly loose, bold mortal, and retire;
This place is holy ground, and God is in the fire!’”

The lines following refer to the giving of the ten commandments:—

“Hark! how insufferable thunders tear
Both earth and heaven! while forked lightnings glare!
Trembles the camp; the solid mountain shakes;
The earth, beneath it, to the centre quakes—
The Lord descends, the Thunderer's voice is known!
And holy myriads stand around his throne.
The ten dread words from Sinai he recites,
Which his own hands in marble tables writes;
Great Nature's transcript, and eternal law,
Whence future sages shall their models draw;
Wise Greece and haughty Rome are here surpass'd,
Each word, each tittle here, shall earth and heaven outlast.”

The next extract is taken from the piece describing the pestilence, which was sent on account of David numbering the people. David having laid aside his crown, clothes himself in sackcloth, puts ashes on his head, falls prostrate on the ground and begins to pray:—

“Mild Pity heard, and prostrate at the throne
Presents his prayers, and added of her own;
The Father smiles and grants; she shoots away
Beyond the confines of eternal day;
On her own peaceful rainbow swerving down,
She stands confess'd above the sacred town;
Seizes the destroying angel's flaming brand,
Seals in its sheath, and stops his lifted hand.”

The next lines are descriptive of the angel destroying the one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians:—

“Lo! from heaven the avenging angel came,
His sword the pestilence's deadly flame;

Incumbent o'er the deadly camp he flies ;
 So glares an angry comet in the skies.
 A vial of almighty wrath he bore,
 And, crashing, broke, like burst of thunder's roar—
 Oh, what a groan ! as Nature's self expired,
 Or all this habitable mansion fired—
 Awaked by dying shrieks the warriors rose,
 And all in vain their spacious shields oppose :
 Some swear, some pray, but both alike in vain,
 And heaps of myriads lie on myriads slain.
 Averse at length, and slow the morning rose,
 But what a scene its sickly beams disclose !
 'Twas horror, horror all—the plague was kind—
 Paler than death were those it left behind."

following is Wesley's description of Christ rebuking the
 st on the Lake of Gennesaret :—

"He rose unmoved, for all within was peace,
 Chid the mad waves, and bid their tumults cease ;
 Rebuked the winds, which soon forgot to roar,
 And all the murm'ring billows kiss'd the shore."

piece entitled "Jesus in the Manger visited by the Shep-
 " is as follows :—

"With joy and wonder fill'd, the shepherds run
 At early dawn, to seek a brighter sun
 Than e'er before enlighten'd mortal eyes ;
 But oh ! astonish'd heavens ! see where He lies !
 That voice, which shakes the poles, to infant cries
 Is now contracted ;—those Almighty hands
 Which launch th' unerring thunder, wrapt in feeble bands ;
 And He, who turn'd the shining orbs above,
 Which, as His nod prescribes 'em, stand or move ;
 When He comes down our ruin'd world to save,
 Is shelter'd in a stable, and a cave."

following is from a piece entitled, "Signs of the Coming of
 n of man in Glory :"—

"Rumours of war the guilty world affright ;
 Prodigious signs, and many a fearful sight
 Glare in the heavens ; bright suns to darkness turn,
 And moons and stars, all clothed in sackcloth, mourn—
 Well may the earth with horrid murmurs quake,
 When even the powers of Heaven themselves shall shake,
 With fervent heat the elements shall flow,
 Yon azure vault with ruddy vengeance glow ;

Then when the guilty world dissolves for fear,
 Then shall you see the Son of Man appear ;
 Amidst the clouds, the world's great Judge confess'd,
 Circled with glitt'ring hosts, and myriads of the bless'd."

We conclude with an extract from the last poem in the book,
 'The Description of the Heavenly Jerusalem :—

"Of pearls those everlasting gates are made,
 Of precious stones the firm foundation's laid ;
 The walls of jasper, wondrous to behold,
 The city flames with pure ethereal gold ;
 Through its broad streets a lovely river glides,
 It in the midst, with crystal streams, divides
 No solar lamp, or moon's officious ray,
 No twinkling stars to make a fainter day ;
 No useless flambeau there, but from the throne
 A radiant blaze of light profusely shone.
 Here pious souls shall blissful seats obtain,
 With God, and with the Lamb, to endless ages reign."

These extracts are given, first, because the book itself is *extremely* scarce, and not one Methodist in a thousand has ever *seen* it ; and, secondly, as a sort of rebuke to the slap-dash and *too* sweeping censure pronounced against it in Nicholl's *Literary Anecdotes*, namely, that it is "mere pap, or milk and water." Those three volumes are not the best that Mr Wesley published but they are better far than scores of similar productions that have had the good fortune to be read, and therefore to be praised.

To say the least, every one must admire the unwearied diligence of this impoverished man. He had a large and increasing family, and was £300 in debt ; but, instead of sinking under discouragement, he bravely breasts his trials, and, by eagerly seizing those scraps of time which devotion to his clerical duties did not require, he tried to free himself from his distressing embarrassments by writing and publishing, within two short years, four good-sized volumes, besides his "Epistle on Poetry," consisting of nearly eleven hundred lines,

CHAPTER XIII.

CONVOCATION—1701, ETC.

ON three several occasions, Samuel Wesley was elected proctor or convocation man for the diocese of Lincoln. The first of these elections took place in 1701; a second in 1711; the date of the third is doubtful. These three attendances at convocation brought upon him an expenditure of £150, which he could ill afford to bear.

Convocation is an assembly of the clergy of the Church of England by their representatives. It is always held during the session of parliament, and consists of an upper and of a lower house. In the upper house sit the bishops; in the lower the inferior clergy, represented by their proctors and others. The lower house, of which Mr Wesley was a member, consists of twenty-two deans, fifty-three archdeacons, twenty-four prebendaries, and forty-four proctors, (being two proctors for the clergy of each diocese;) altogether one hundred and forty-three persons. The prolocutor or speaker of the lower house is always chosen by itself. His duty is to take care that the members of the house attend its sittings, to collect their debates and votes, and to convey to the upper house the resolutions which they pass. Convocation is always called together by the royal writ, directed to the archbishop of each province, requiring him to summon all bishops, deans, archdeacons, and others qualified or entitled to sit therein. Up to the year 1605, it was the privilege of convocation to fix the taxes which should be paid by the clergy; but, at that time, this privilege was surrendered to the House of Commons, on the condition that henceforth, and in lieu of it, the clergy should be allowed to vote at elections of members of parliament, a right of which heretofore they had been deprived. The power of convocation is limited. Its members are not to make any

canons or ecclesiastical laws without the royal licence ; nor, even when the royal licence is granted, can any newly-made laws or canons be put in force except under certain restrictions. They have the power to examine and to censure all heretical and schismatical books ; but the authors of such books have an appeal to the king in chancery or to his delegates. It ought also to be added, that members of convocation have the same privileges allowed as belong to members of parliament.

Such, then, was the ecclesiastical parliament of which Samuel Wesley was elected a member, by his brother clergymen, in the diocese of Lincoln, in 1701. The honour was distinguished, though, to a poor man like himself, seriously expensive. Some writers have not been sparing in the censures they have thought proper to pronounce on Wesley for spending so much money on convocation attendance, which, as is alleged, might have been much better spent in the payment of his debts, or in providing for the wants of his wife and children. Such censures are soon uttered, but are scarcely merited. The convocation, which was called together in 1701, was one of unusual importance, and it behoved the clergy of the diocese of Lincoln to send as their proctor the most fitting man that the diocese contained ; and that man, being elected, was bound by every principle of duty and of honour to take upon himself the onerous responsibility of representing the gentlemen who had thus distinguished him. The expenses of the office might be inconvenient, yet to be selected as a fitting representative to the most august and important ecclesiastical assembly in the land, was an honour not to be despised. Many a minister struggling with poverty would have readily made as great a sacrifice to have attained as high a dignity, especially if its attainment was likely to be the stepping-stone to yet higher ecclesiastical power and benefit. Samuel Wesley's talents, learning, piety, and literary works were sufficient to justify him in aspiring after the higher, if not highest offices that the Church has to give ; and it is not improbable that had it not been for his pecuniary embarrassments, and his cruel imprisonment in Lincoln gaol, he would have died, not the rector of an almost unknown country parish, but in one of the most distinguished positions to which a clergyman of the Church of England can be exalted. Apart from a sense of the honour which his brethren had bestowed upon him, and apart from his readiness to undertake difficult and

expensive duties, it is no disparagement of Samuel Wesley's unblemished character to say, that perhaps he had some hope of such promotion when he consented, at such an inconvenient sacrifice, to go as proctor to the house of convocation. Considering his talents, attainments, and labours, such ambition was neither mercenary nor inordinate. The clergy of the diocese of Lincoln conferred an honour upon the Epworth rector in thus electing him; but the honour was merited, and it would have been not only an act of kindness, but an act of justice, if those who gave the honour had also given the money which it cost to wear it.

A remarkable anecdote is related in connexion with Mr Wesley's first attendance at convocation. Dr A. Clarke, who gives it, says he had it from the lips of Mr Wesley's son John. The statement is as follows:—

"Were I," said John Wesley, "to write my own life, I should begin it before I was born, merely for the purpose of mentioning a disagreement between my father and mother. 'Sukey,' said my father to my mother one day after family prayer, 'why did you not say *amen* this morning to the prayer for the king?' 'Because,' said she, 'I do not believe the Prince of Orange to be king.' 'If that be the case,' said he, 'you and I must part; for if we have two kings, we must have two beds.' My mother was inflexible. My father went immediately to his study; and, after spending some time with himself, set out for London, where, being convocation man for the diocese of Lincoln, he remained without visiting his own house for the remainder of the year. On March 11th, in the following year, 1702, King William died; and as both my father and mother were agreed as to the legitimacy of Queen Anne's title, the cause of their misunderstanding ceased. My father returned to Epworth, and conjugal harmony was restored."*

Mr Wesley's own written account of this affair is the following:—"The year before King William died, my father observed my mother did not say *amen* to the prayer for the king. She said she could not, for she did not believe the Prince of Orange was king. He vowed he would never cohabit with her till she did. He then took his horse and rode away; nor did she hear anything of him for a twelvemonth. He then came back and lived with her as before. But I fear his vow was not forgotten before God."†

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

† *Methodist Mag.*, 1784, p. 606.

There may be the merest modicum of truth in this strange story; but the greater part of it is unfounded.

We grant that Mrs Wesley held the doctrine of the "divine right of kings;" and holding that, of course, she regarded the Revolution of 1688 as a royal wrong, and considered William of Orange a usurper. Of this there can be no doubt. Writing in the year 1709, she says:—"Whether they did well, in driving a prince from his hereditary throne, I leave to their own consciences to determine; though I cannot tell how to think that a king of England can ever be accountable to his subjects for any mal-administrations or abuse of power; but as he derives his power from God, so to Him only he must answer for his using it. But still I make a great difference between those who entered into the confederacy against their prince, and those who, knowing nothing of the contrivance, and so consequently not consenting to it, only submitted to the present government. But whether the praying for a usurper, and vindicating his usurpations after he has the throne, be not participating in his sins, is easily determined."^{*}

With such language before us, there can be no question that the opinions of Mrs Wesley concerning King William and his predecessor King James were widely different from those which her husband held; and it may be easily imagined that such a difference of opinion might lead to occasional unpleasantness. No one doubts the truthfulness of the story up to a certain point; namely, that Mrs Wesley, on a certain morning in 1701, at family prayer, omitted to say *amen* to the prayer for King William; that her husband took her to task for this omission; that sharp words ensued; and that he immediately set out for London. The one damaging point which we deny is, that Samuel Wesley allowed a miserable squabble respecting the rights of King William to make him neglect his wife, and to leave his house, his family, and his flock for the space of twelve months; a thing which, if true, would have been a scandalous, cruel, and wicked act. Fortunately there is ample evidence to refute such a disgraceful fiction.

We maintain, in the first place, that the story is highly improbable. Samuel and Susannah Wesley became husband and wife about the time of William and Mary's accession. Something like a dozen years had elapsed since then. Every Sunday, and in fact, every day, Samuel Wesley had been accustomed to pray for King

^{*} Kirk's *Mother of the Wesleys*.

liam. His wife knew this, and yet all the time they had lived in love and harmony. Up to this period, there is not the slightest evidence that any unpleasantness had sprung out of such a father. Susannah Wesley loved her husband, and her husband loved her. "Reverence and love your mother," wrote her husband to their son Samuel. "Though I should be jealous of any man rival in your breast, yet I will not be of her. The more you pay her, and the more frequently and kindly you write her, the more you will please your affectionate father." With such affection subsisting between them, is it likely that a man of the high character of Samuel Wesley would permit a paltry rumour about King William to lead to such a lengthened conjugal separation, involving not only a cruel neglect of his wife and family, but a criminal absence from his flock, and a public disgrace cast upon his hitherto spotless reputation? Those who doubt and do believe a legend so unlikely, have more faith than is reasonable.

But, in the second place, we further maintain, that the disgraceful part of this story is not only improbable, but impossible. It is well known that convocation was summoned twice during the year 1701. In the first instance, it met on the 10th of February, but was prorogued on the 24th of June following. It was convened again on the 31st of December; and, between nine and ten weeks after, at the death of King William on the 8th of March 1702, it was again prorogued. How then stands the matter in reference to Samuel Wesley's long-continued and criminal absence from his home and from his church? If he attended the convocation which opened on February 10, it is *not true* that "he remained without visiting his own house for the remainder of the year;" for, on the 14th and 18th of May of that same year, we find him at Epworth, attending to his wife with affectionate tenderness, when she was confined of twins; and writing to Archbishop Sharpe the two letters inserted in our last chapter. If, again, he attended the convocation which opened on Dec. 31st, all the time that he was absent from his family and from his parish is not more than about ten weeks; for, at the expiration of that time, according to the story itself, "King William died," and, convocation being in consequence prorogued, "Wesley returned to Epworth, and conjugal harmony was restored."

Let the reader choose which convocation in 1701 he likes, or,

as we are inclined to do, let him entertain the opinion that Samuel Wesley attended both, yet, still the evidence above recited, most triumphantly refutes all that is disgraceful in this cock-and-bull story; for we have proof that, in neither case, was the rector of Epworth away from his family and charge for a longer period than ten or a dozen weeks.

We submit that in such an absence there was nothing to justify such a story. At least, an entire week would be spent in mere journeying. Then, there were the sittings of convocation, which we know were unusually important and exciting. Then there was the fact that Samuel Wesley was a literary man, and had already, in London, published a large number of literary works—a fact giving rise to business transactions, which the rector would doubtless attend to, now that he was personally present. And then, finally, there was the fact that his brother Matthew was resident in London, and probably also his mother, besides a large number of his early and literary friends, with all of whom, it is natural to suppose, he would wish to spend as much time as his other duties would permit. Put all these things together, and what is there to be gaped at in the rector of Epworth, as "*convocation man*," being absent from his family and his church, once, or even twice, at the beginning of the years 1701 and 1702, for about ten or a dozen weeks? It is far from our intention to accuse either John Wesley or Adam Clarke of wilful misrepresentation; in this respect they are both far above suspicion, but the tale, as first told to John Wesley, was doubtless told in an exaggerated form; and it is no disrespect to the wonderful memory of Adam Clarke to say, that during the thirty or more years which elapsed between the time when John Wesley told the story and the time when Adam Clarke published it, the remembrance of the latter was not so vivid as to be infallible.

We begrudge the space which has been filled with this unfortunate anecdote; but Samuel Wesley is too great and good a man to permit his character to be injured undeservedly. Let the full truthfulness of the legend be admitted, and Wesley's fair fame is branded. Viewed in such a light, the thing is serious, and deserves some research and trouble in refuting it. This is the only matter, in the whole of Mr Wesley's history, that in the least affects his morality and honour; and, in our conscience, we believe that everything in the story, which is deserving of being

asured, is unfounded fiction, and utterly unworthy of the public defence.

Samuel Wesley attended convocation thrice. It is certain that one of these occasions was in 1701, and it is probable that a second was in the same year; and hence we give a brief account of the proceedings of both these ecclesiastical gatherings.

With the exception of the abortive attempt in 1689, convocation, though regularly assembling with every parliament, had really done nothing for the last nine and thirty years. Now, in 1701, it met to transact business. First of all, on February 10th, the ecclesiastical legislators assembled in St Paul's Cathedral, where a sermon was preached by Dr Haley, Dean of Chichester. The members of the Lower House then proceeded to the Chapter House, and elected Dr Hooper, Dean of Canterbury, their prolocutor. "A man of learning," says Burnet, "of good conduct, but reserved, crafty, and ambitious." They then adopted certain resolutions as a preparation for the battle which they knew was coming. 1. That they had a right to sit whenever parliament met, and that they could not be legally prorogued but when parliament was prorogued. 2. That they had no need of licence to enter upon debates, and to prepare matters. 3. That as parliament could pass no act without the royal assent, so convocation could neither enact nor publish a canon without the royal licence. This soon brought them into conflict with their brethren of the Upper House. On February 25th, an order was brought to them, issued by the archbishop, proroguing both houses in the usual manner. At the time, the Lower House was holding its session in the chapel of Henry VIII., and the session was continued in defiance of the archbishop's mandate, until, after a short debate, they adjourned themselves. Then followed a private squabble between the archbishop and the prolocutor, respecting the prerogatives of the two houses. This lasted until the 6th of March, when the two houses met, and agreed upon the form of an address to the king, thanking him for his pious regard for the reformed churches in general, and expressing their determination to maintain the royal supremacy, and the articles and canons of the Church.

Their next session was a fortnight later, on March 20th, when the prolocutor of the Lower House brought up a representation of the "pernicious, dangerous, and scandalous" doctrines contained in Toland's "Christianity not Mysterious," and requested the

bishops to agree to their resolutions, and to censure the book. This was another cause of jangling. Burnet says :—" This struck directly at Episcopal authority. It seemed strange to see men who had so long asserted the divine right of Episcopacy, and that presbyters were only their assistants and council, now assume to themselves the most important act of church government, the judging in points of doctrine."

On March 22d, another book was discussed in the Upper House, entitled, " Essays on the Balance of Power," in which it was asserted that persons had been promoted in the Church who were remarkable for nothing but enmity to the divinity of Christ.* The bishops, therefore, agreed that a paper should be affixed to the doors of Westminster Abbey, calling upon the author to make good his assertion, in order that the parties might be proceeded against, otherwise the passage in question would be voted a public scandal.

The next fortnight was spent in a quarrel between the two houses respecting the right of the Lower House to prorogue itself, and they then adjourned from the 8th of April to the 8th of May.

On the latter day the houses again assembled. The archbishop warmly rebuked the Lower House for their unwarrantable assumption in daring to prorogue themselves, and for claiming a distinct recess ; and declared that such behaviour had " given the greatest blow to the Church that it received since the Presbyterian assembly that sat at Westminster in the late times of confusion." This rebuke made bad things worse, and the Lower House became more rebellious than ever. The bishops appointed a committee of five to meet a similar number of the Lower House, for the purpose of

* Three years previous to this, Thomas Firmin, a famous citizen of London, had died ; a man held in high esteem for his charities of all sorts, private and public. Firmin, in early life, sat under the ministry of John Goodwin, but was afterward converted to Socinianism by John Biddle, already mentioned in this history. Firmin was a man of great wealth, and promoted the printing of books against the Trinity, and distributed them freely over the nation, to all who would accept of them. The result was, the greatest mysteries in religion became the common topic of discourse, and were treated as the contrivances of priests to bring the world into blind submission to their authority. This raised a great outcry against Socinianism ; and, as Tillotson and some of the bishops had lived in great friendship with Mr Firmin, (because of his charitable temper, which they thought it became them to encourage,) books like " Essays on the Balance of Power," began to be put in circulation.—(See Burnet's *History of His Own Time*. 1st Edition, vol. ii. p. 212.)

examining the acts of the present synod, and to report upon them. To this proposal, the Lower House replied that they should not nominate any committee; but some of its members sent an address to the archbishop stating their disapproval of its proceedings. Burnet says:—"Many of the most eminent and learned of its members protested against its proceedings;" but the actual vote shows that the opposition, in point of numbers, was a very significant minority, consisting, at the most, of only fifteen persons.

To evince their opposition still more, the Lower House proceeded to attack the work of Burnet on the Thirty-nine Articles. This work had been undertaken at the request of Queen Mary, and was published in 1699, after being revised, corrected, and approved by three archbishops, Tillotson, Tennison, and Sharpe, and five bishops, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Lloyd, Williams, and More. The complaints of the Lower House were three. 1. That Burnet's book tends to introduce such a latitude and diversity of opinions, as the articles were framed to avoid. 2. That there are many passages in the book which are contrary to the true meaning of the articles, and to other received doctrines of the Church. And, 3. That there are some things in the book which are of dangerous consequence to the Church of England, and which derogate from the honour of its reformation. For a time, the Upper House actually refused to receive these complaints, because of other irregularities of which the Lower House had been guilty; but, at length, at Burnet's request, they were entertained. A committee was appointed, and came to the following resolutions:—1. That the Lower House "had no manner of power judicially to censure any book." 2. That it "ought not to have entered on the examination of a book of any bishop without first acquainting the president and bishops with it." 3. That the censure of Burnet's book is defamatory and scandalous." 4. That Burnet, by his writings, "had done great service to the Church of England, and deserves the thanks of convocation." 5. That the prolocutor and some other members of the Lower House had been guilty of contempt and disobedience.

These were hard words; but the unseemly squabble was soon over; for a few days afterwards, on June 24th, the royal writ prorogued parliament, and, of course, prorogued convocation with it.

The new convocation was opened on the 31st of December following. The Latin service was read by the Bishop of Oxford, and the sermon preached by the Dean of St Paul's. Dr Woodward was elected prolocutor, and two months were occupied in the same angry discussions, respecting the prerogatives of the two houses, which had disgraced the convocation previous. The simple point contended for was this: the Lower House claimed to be on the same footing as to the Upper House that the Commons in Parliament are in regard to the House of Lords; that is, to adjourn by their own authority, apart from the Upper House, where, and to such time, as they should think proper. This the Upper House resisted, maintaining that the ancient usage was for the archbishop to adjourn both houses together, and to the same time. This was the only matter discussed by the convocation which met on December 31, 1701; and this was not settled, for, in the midst of the discussion, King William died on the 8th of March 1702, and thus those ecclesiastical brawlers were sent home to attend to more sacred work in their respective churches.

These disreputable contentions continued for many years after this. "The governing men in the Lower House," says Burnet, "were headstrong and factious, and designed to force themselves into preferment by the noise they made, and by the ill-humour which they endeavoured to spread among the clergy, who were generally soured by their proceedings."

It is impossible to say what part Samuel Wesley took in these convocation debates; and, in the absence of information, the reader is left to guess.

We conclude the present chapter with a brief review of the state of things during the reign of King William's successor, Queen Anne. This will clear the way for further details respecting Mr Wesley.

Anne was proclaimed Queen of England in March 1702. She was in the thirty-eighth year of her age, but was as much under the tutelage of Lord and Lady Marlborough as if she had been a girl of fifteen, or of still tenderer years. Three days after her accession, Marlborough was decorated with the order of the garter, and very soon obtained the entire command of the English army. His countess was made groom of the stole and mistress of the robes, and was intrusted with the management of the pri-

His two daughters were nominated ladies of the bed-chamber; and the father-in-law of one of these ladies, the Earl of Marlborough, obtained the renewal of a pension of £2000, which was granted him by King William. Marlborough's influence, the court of England was omnipotent.*

Queen Anne, unlike her predecessor King William, was a most decided Tory. From her infancy she had imbibed unconquerable prejudices against the Whigs; and looked upon them all not only as publicans, who hated the very shadow of regal authority, but as placable enemies to the Church of England. Hence she lost the opportunity of filling up offices of State with her own partisans and friends, and, in a short time, the Whigs of King William were expelled, and the Tories of Queen Anne took their posts.† All was an influence on the nation in general. The people began to change their sentiments, and persons of all ranks began to argue in favour of strict hereditary succession, divine right, and non-resistance to the regal power.

Macaulay says, "had made Queen Anne a bigot. Such was the constitution of her mind, that, to the religion of her nurse she could not but adhere, without examination and without dissent, till she was laid in her coffin. In the court of her father she had been deaf to all that could be urged in favour of transubstantiation and auricular confession. In the court of her mother she was equally deaf to all that could be urged in favour of general union among Protestants. This slowness and obstinacy made her important. It was a great thing to be the only member of the Royal family who regarded Papists and Presbyterians with an impartial aversion."

When after the Queen's accession there was a parliamentary election, and the choice went generally in favour of those who were

Macaulay writes:—"Queen Anne had no will, no judgment, no conscience, no sense of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. To them she had sacrificed her own prejudices, habits, interests. In obedience to them, she had joined in a conspiracy against her father. She had fled from Whitehall in the depth of winter through ice and mire, to a hackney coach. She had taken refuge in the camp. She had consented to yield her place in the order of succession to the Duke of Orange. While a large party was disposed to make her an idol, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough regarded her merely as their puppet, and no one who had a natural interest in Anne, could observe, without uneasiness, the strange infatuation which made her the slave of an imperious and reckless favourite."

Macaulay's *History of England*.

friends to the Church and monarchy. The House of Commons was now ready, as well as her Majesty's chief ministers, to concur in her designs for the suppression of Dissenters, and for the aggrandisement of the Established Church. The House of Lords, however, had been so remodelled, in the reign of King William, that there was only a minority of its members in favour of the Queen's principles and projects, and hence ecclesiastical measures, which passed the Lower House with acclamations, met in the Upper House with opposition and defeat.

One of the first measures of the new parliament was the "Occasional Conformity Bill," the real object of which was to render null the Toleration Act, by providing that all who took the sacrament and the test, as qualifications for office, and afterwards went to the meetings of Dissenters, should be disabled for holding public offices, and should be fined £100, and £5 additional for every day that such person or persons continued in public office after being present at such Dissenting meetings. The Queen's Tories in the House of Commons carried the bill with a triumphant majority; but, in the House of Lords, King William's bishops stoutly opposed the measure, and, despite the influence of Marlborough, succeeded in its rejection. When parliament broke up, the Queen told its members that she hoped such of her subjects as had "the *misfortune* to dissent from the Church of England would rest secure and satisfied in the Act of Toleration, which she was firmly resolved to maintain;" and that those who had the "happiness and advantage to be of *our Church* might rest assured that she would make it her particular care to encourage and maintain the Church in all its just rights and privileges, and so transmit it securely settled to posterity." *

When parliament re-assembled, in 1703, the rejected "Occasional Conformity Bill" was again brought into the House of Commons, and passed without any considerable opposition, but was again rejected in the House of Lords.

In the same year, the Queen, on her birthday, showed her devoted attachment to the Church of England by making a grant of her whole revenue, arising out of the first-fruits and tenths, for augmenting the livings of the poorer clergy. These first-fruits and tenths amounted to about £16,000 a year, and, in the time of Charles II. had been distributed chiefly among his concubines and

* *Life of Queen Anne*, London, 1721.

his illegitimate children. There were now hundreds of clergymen whose livings were not worth more than £20 a year, and thousands whose livings did not exceed £50 a year. Of course, the Queen was well nigh overwhelmed with addresses, thanking her for her royal bounty, and it was difficult to tell whether she was prouder of the title "Queen of England," than she was of "Nursing-mother to the Church." This tender care for poor ministers, however, did not extend to other sects of the Protestant communion; for, just at the same time, this royal benefactress allowed the Irish Parliament to stop the paltry grant of £1200 per annum, which had been paid to the poor Presbyterian ministers in Ulster in the reign of her predecessor, King William.

In 1704, the "Occasional Conformity Bill" was a third time introduced into the House of Commons, though there was still not the slightest chance of its passing in the House of Lords.

In the year following, Lord Halifax moved, in the Upper House, that a day might be appointed to inquire into the "Dangers of the Church," it being alleged that the rejection of the "Occasional Conformity Bill" was likely to ruin both Church and State, and especially when this was coupled with the liberty of the press and the licence of the times, wherein no restraint was laid upon those who vilified the established religion. Both Houses of Parliament, however, passed a resolution, to the effect, that the Church of England was in a most safe and flourishing condition, and the Queen ordered a proclamation to be issued accordingly.

All this created great excitement, which will have to be more fully noticed in another chapter. At present, we can only add that, in 1712, an act was passed by parliament, to the effect, that, if any person holding public office should attend a conventicle, at which more than ten persons were assembled, he should be fined £40, and should be adjudged incapable henceforth to hold such office, or any other office or employment whatsoever, unless he conformed to the Church of England for one year without being present at any conventicle, and received, during that year, the holy sacrament at least three times.

This intolerant Act of Parliament was followed by another of a kindred kind, in 1714, the year of Queen Anne's decease—"An Act to prevent the growth of schism, and for the further security of the Churches of England and Ireland, as by law established." By

this statute, it was enacted that, if any person dared to keep any public or private school without subscribing a declaration to the effect that he would conform to the Liturgy of the Church of England, and without obtaining a licence from the ordinary of the place, such person, on conviction, should be committed to the common gaol for three months. The same penalty was to be inflicted upon a person who had duly qualified himself for the office of schoolmaster, and had obtained the necessary licence, if he dared to be present at any conventicle where prayer was not offered for Queen Anne. *

This was a fitting wind up of the reign of an ecclesiastical, though well-intentioned bigot. Anne was seized with apoplexy on the 28th of July 1714, and four days afterwards died, without being able either to receive the sacrament or to sign her will. This princess was remarkable neither for learning nor capacity, and yet "she was," says John Wesley, "a good wife, a tender mother, a warm friend, an indulgent mistress, a munificent patron, and a merciful monarch; for, during her whole reign, no subjects' blood was shed for treason. In a word, if she was not the greatest she was certainly one of the best and most unblemished sovereigns that ever sat upon the throne of England; and well deserved the expressive, though simple, epithet of 'The good Queen Anne.'" †

Great efforts were made, during the reign of Anne, to multiply churches, but, at the same time, there was an enormous increase of places of public resort and public discussion. Club-houses, chocolate-houses, and coffee-houses became so numerous that, besides the large ones, there was one or more for almost every parish in the capital, in which citizens regaled themselves to their hearts' content, and found fault with the management of public matters. On entering a coffee-house, the visitor had only to pay a penny at the bar, and for this he was not only served with a cup of coffee, but accommodated with the newspapers of the day, and with the newest pamphlets on morals and on politics. Tradesmen forsook their shops, and merchants their offices, to take care of the affairs of state, and to harangue upon the misconduct of the ministry, until, by neglecting their business, those oratorical financiers and disinterested patriots were, not unfrequently, seized by an ambushment of bumbailiffs, and, after having defrayed the debts of

* *Life of Queen Anne.*

† *Wesley's History of England.*

the nation, were ignominiously conducted to a sponging-house for not being able to pay their own.

While the middle and the lower classes were thus discussing politics, the fashionable orders were devoted to pleasure and to gallantry. From ten to twelve the beau received his visitors in bed, where he lay in state, his periwig, superbly powdered, lying beside him on the sheets; while his toilet-table was sprinkled with amorous poems, a canister of Spanish snuff, a smelling bottle, and a few fashionable trinkets. At twelve he rose, and after spending three hours in perfuming his clothes, in soaking his hands in washes to make them delicate and white, in tinging his cheeks with carminative to give them a gentle blush, in dipping his handkerchief in rose water, and in powdering his linen to banish from it the smell of soap—the self-indulgent exquisite then sat down to dinner. At four o'clock, he repaired to some place of public concourse, where he endeavoured to display his gallantry and wit. At five, he proceeded to the theatre, where, to give himself the air of a critic, he readjusted his cravat, and sprinkled his face with snuff. From the theatre he would wander to the park, buzzing and fluttering from lady to lady, and chattering to each a jargon made up of bad English, atrocious French, and undistinguishable Latin. And then, his lounge in the park being ended, he concluded the day by dropping into some fashionable party, where he chatted his empty nothings, played at ombre, and lost his money with an air of fashionable indifference.

Besides these fashionable beaus, there were those who, in the language of the day, were called bully-beaus,—fellows figuring in Ramillies' perukes, laced hats, black cockades, and scarlet suits; and who maintained a reputation for courage, by empty swagger and violent assaults on the peaceable members of society. These gallants, instead of confining their follies and their fopperies within the compass of the metropolis, very often made country excursions to bamboozle fox-hunting squires, and to make love to their unsophisticated daughters. The fair rustics were dazzled by the surpassing finery of such manners, dress, and speech; while young clod-poll squires were set agog to emulate the captivating visitor. In this way many a youth, whose gayest party had been a country wake, was translated into a London fop. As soon as his father had broken his neck over a six-barred gate, or fairly drunk himself into his coffin, the rustic aspirant turned his back

in supplying the poor of their villages with money, the industrious with work, the idle with counsel, the vicious with rebuke, and the sick with medicines and with cordials. In this last department, many of them became so presumptuous that no ailment was too hard for them, from a toothache to a pestilence, from the stroke of a cudgel to that of a thunderbolt.

Their sons were taught a little Latin and less Greek, beaten into them, either at one of the public establishments or by the thwackem of a domestic schoolroom. When they had been whipped through the parts of speech, interjections and all, and driven through a few fragmentary portions of the classics, they were then qualified to shine equally in the senate or at the masquerade. The grand finish to such an education was the tour of Europe; and forth went the boy accordingly, in leading strings, to gaze at streets, mountains, rivers, and trees; and to pick up, in his rambles, the fashions, frivolities, and vices of the countries through which he passed.

Their peasantry still presented much the same rude simplicity which had characterised the poorer classes for the last hundred years. Rural education had undergone little, if any, improvement; and the monotonous toils of daily life were enlivened, chiefly, by wakes and fairs, thronged with puppet-shows, pedlars stalls, raffling-tables, and drinking-booths.

Such is a bird's-eye view of the general state of English society at the commencement of the eighteenth century.*

[The facts in this chapter have been gathered principally from Knight's *Pictorial History*, Macaulay's *History*, Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, Lathbury's *History of Convocation*, the *Tatler*, the *Spectator*, &c.]

CHAPTER XIV.

DISASTERS AND DISSENTERS.—1702-1705.

WE have already seen that Mr Wesley was seriously involved in debt. During his attendance at convocation he seems to have received considerable assistance. In a letter to Archbishop Sharpe, dated August 7, 1702, he mentions several sums which he had received from eminent persons: the Dean of Exeter, £10; Dr Stanley, £10; Archbishop of Canterbury, £10, 10s.; and, he adds:—"Even my lord Marquis of Normanby, by my good lady's solicitations succeeding your Grace's, did verily and indeed, with his own hand, give me twenty guineas, and my lady five. With these and other sums I made up about £60, and came home joyful enough,—thanked God,—paid as many debts as I could,—quieted the rest of my creditors,—took the management of my house into my own hands,—and had ten guineas left to take my harvest."*

What is meant by the last sentence but one, I hardly know. It is difficult to regard it as a reflection on the household management of his wife. Probably, on account of his wife's feeble health, his domestic matters had been managed by his servant; but, be that as it might, the rector now, perhaps unwisely, took the management himself.

Still, however, the current of life was far from flowing smoothly. Soon after the removal from the miserable hut at South Ormsby to the spacious parsonage at Epworth, the rector's barn fell down, and had to be rebuilt; and now, on July 31st, 1702, another disaster occurred, which was more serious than the former.

Mr Wesley shall tell his own story in the letter to Archbishop Sharpe already quoted. He writes:—"On the last of July 1702, a fire broke out in my house, by some sparks which took hold of the thatch, and consumed about two-thirds of it before it could

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

be quenched. I was at the lower end of the town visiting a sick person, and went thence to R. Cogan's. As I was returning, they brought me the news. I got one of his horses, rode up, and heard, by the way, that my wife, children, and books were saved; for which God be praised, as well as for what He has taken. They were all together in my study, and the fire under them. When it broke out, Mrs Wesley got two of the children in her arms, and ran through the smoke and fire; but one of them was left in the hurry, till the other cried for her, when the neighbours ran in, and got her out through the fire, as they did my books, and most of my goods; this very paper among the rest, which I afterwards found, as I was looking over what was saved.

"I find it is some happiness to have been miserable, for my mind has been so blunted with former misfortunes, that this scarce made any impression upon me. I shall go on, by God's assistance, to take my tithe; and, when that is in, to rebuild my house, having, at last, crowded my family into what is left, and not missing many of my goods.

"I humbly ask your Grace's pardon for this long, melancholy story, and leave to subscribe myself your Grace's ever obliged and most humble servant,
S. WESLEY."

It is a somewhat singular circumstance that the sheet of paper on which this letter was written, was one on which he had begun a letter to the archbishop six days before the fire broke out. About four square inches of the lower corner of the fly-leaf was burnt, and the whole was stained by the water that helped to put out the flames.

The good archbishop, to whom this account was sent, came forward both with his purse and influence; and this produced the following touching and characteristic letter:—

"EPWORTH, March 20, 1703.

"MY LORD,—I have heard that all great men have the art of forgetfulness, but never found it in such perfection as in your lordship: only it is in a different way from others; for most forget their *promises*, but your Grace those *benefits* you have conferred. I am pretty confident your Grace neither reflects on, nor imagines how much you have done for me; nor what sums I received by your lordship's bounty and favour; without

which I had been, ere this, moulding in a jail, and sunk a thousand fathoms below nothing.

"Will your Grace permit me to show you an account of some of them ?

| | | | |
|--|-----|----|---|
| "From the Marchioness of Normanby, . . . | £20 | 0 | 0 |
| The Lady Northampton (I think), . . . | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Duke of Buckingham and Duchess, 2 years since, . . . | 26 | 17 | 6 |
| The Queen, | 43 | 0 | 0 |
| The Bishop of Sarum (Bishop Burnett), . . . | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| The Archbishop of York, at least . . . | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Besides lent to (almost) a desperate debtor, . . . | 25 | 0 | 0 |

£184 17 6

"A frightful sum, if one saw it all together ; but it is beyond thanks, and I must never hope to perform that, as I ought, till another world ; where, if I get first into the harbour, I hope none shall go before me in welcoming your lordship into everlasting habitations ; where you will be no more tired with my follies, nor concerned at my misfortunes. However, I may pray for your Grace while I have breath, and that for something nobler than this world can give ; it is for the increase of God's favour, of the light of His countenance, and of the foretaste of those joys, the firm belief whereof can only support us in this weary wilderness. And, if it be not too bold a request, I beg your Grace would not forget me, though it be but in your prayer for all sorts and conditions of men ; among whom, as none has been more obliged to your Grace, so, I am sure, none ought to have a deeper sense of it than your Grace's most dutiful and most humble servant,

"S. WESLEY."

To a man with a large family, and who, if not at present, had recently been £300 in debt, the burning of his house was a dire disaster ; but, alas ! Samuel Wesley's calamities did not end with this. During the winter of 1704, which was very shortly after the rebuilding of his house, another fire broke out, and burnt the whole of his flax ; and, five years after that, a third fire utterly destroyed his recently re-erected rectory. But these are facts which, in chronological order, will have to be noticed anon.

In the year 1703, a small pamphlet was published, entitled, "A

Letter from a Country Divine to his Friend in London, concerning the Education of Dissenters in their Private Academies in several parts of this Nation : Humbly offered to the consideration of the Grand Committee of Parliament for Religion, now sitting, London, 1703," 4to., pp. 15.* Samuel Wesley was the writer of this letter ; but it was printed without either his consent or knowledge ; and, as it led to a serious, prolonged, and ill-natured controversy, it behoves us to examine its history.

Up to the time that Mr Wesley went to Oxford University, he was a Nonconformist, the child, and the grandchild of expelled Nonconformist ministers, and a student trained in Nonconformist academies, and having none but Nonconformist acquaintances. His life at Oxford was retired, and, therefore, not likely to make him many friends of another description. On his return to London, in 1688, he not only kept up a friendship with some of his old Dissenting associates, but also began to become acquainted with several gentlemen of the Church of England. One of these, knowing that Wesley had been educated in a Dissenting academy, zealously, if not wisely, urged him to write an account of the inner life of such establishments. For some time Wesley resisted this request ; but at length a circumstance happened which led him to comply. He tells us that he went, with some of his Dissenting acquaintances, to a Dissenting festival, held in a house in Leadenhall Street. The discourse of these festive Dissenters was so fulsome, profane, and lewd, that he was not able to endure it. In a little while they sat down to supper, and now they all began to rail against monarchy, and to blaspheme the memory of King Charles the martyr. These proceedings convinced Wesley that his old friends, who some years before had prompted him to "dabble in rhyming lampoons both on Church and State," were as disaffected and disloyal as ever. He felt disgusted, and leaving the room, he went home, and, before he slept, wrote the letter, which was published some twelve or thirteen years afterwards.

But here we must pause. The festival, at which Wesley was present, was the anniversary of the notorious Calves-head Club, and a brief account of that infamous fraternity seems needful.

* This is taken from Clarke's *Wesley Family* ; but it seems to be a mistake to say that the letter consisted of 15 pages. The third edition, published by Clavel, in 1706, is now before us, and consists of only 8 pages 4to.

In the British Museum, there is a small quarto pamphlet of twenty-two pages, entitled "The Secret History of the Calves-head Club; or, The Republican Unmasked: Wherein is fully shown the religion of the Calves-head heroes, in their anniversary thanksgiving songs, on the 30th January, by them called anthems, for the years 1693 to 1697; now published to demonstrate the restless, implacable spirit of a certain party still among us, who are never to be satisfied, till the present establishment in Church and State is subverted. London: Printed and sold by the booksellers of London and Westminster, 1703." From that pamphlet the following particulars are taken:—

The preface states, that, "the poems, or ribaldry, and trash following were composed and set to music for the use of the Calves-head Club, which was erected by an impudent set of people, who have their feasts of calves' heads, in several parts of the town, on the 30th of January, in derision of that day, and in defiance of monarchy; at divers of which meetings the following compositions were sung, and which, in affront of the Church, were called anthems."

The preface then descants on the persecutions and indignities suffered by King Charles I., and states that, "of all the indignities offered to the manes of the injured prince, nothing equals the inhumanity and profaneness of the Calves-head Club."

It further alleges:—"That Milton and some other creatures of the commonwealth had instituted this club, in opposition to Bishop Juxon, Dr Sanderson, Dr Hammond, and other divines of the Church of England, who met privately every 30th of January, and, though it was during the time of the usurpation, compiled a private form of service for the day, not much different from what we now find in the Liturgy."

It is stated further, that "after the Restoration, the eyes of the Government being upon the whole (Calves-head) party, they were obliged to meet with a great deal of precaution; but now, in the second year of the reign of King William, they meet almost in a public manner, and apprehend nothing."

"A gentleman, about eight years ago, went out of mere curiosity to see their club, which was kept at no fixed house, but removed as they saw convenient. The place they met in, when he was with them, was in a blind alley about Moorfields; and the company wholly consisted of Independents and Anabaptists. The

famous Jerry White, formerly chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, who, no doubt, came to sanctify with his pious exhortations the ribaldry of the day, said grace. After the table-cloth was removed, the anniversary anthem, as they impiously called it, was sung, and a calf's head filled with wine, or other liquor, was placed before the company. Then a brimmer went about to the pious memory of those worthy patriots that had killed the tyrant, and had delivered the country from his arbitrary sway; and, last of all, a collection was made for the mercenary scribbler, who had composed the anthem, to which every man contributed according to his zeal for the cause, or the ability of his purse."

Such are the principal statements contained in the edition of this curious and scarce pamphlet, published in 1703; but, in another edition, published two years afterwards, it is added: "That an axe was hung up in the club room; and that the bill of fare was a large dish of calves' heads dressed in divers ways, a large pike with a small one in his mouth as an emblem of tyranny, a large cod's head to represent the person of the king, and a boar's head with an apple in its mouth to represent the king's bestiality. After the repast, one of the elders of the club presented an Eikon Basilike, which, with great solemnity, was burnt upon the table whilst the anthem was being sung; and then another elder produced Milton's 'Defensio Populi Anglicani,' upon which all laid their hands, and made a protestation, in form of an oath, for ever to stand by and to maintain it."

The anthems for the years 1693 to 1697, inclusive, are then given in the pamphlet, and contain some things which it would be criminal to reprint. We subjoin the least objectionable specimens that we can give.

The anthem for 1693 consists of five verses of eight lines each, with a chorus. The following lines are taken from the third and fourth verses:—

"Triumphant laurels too must crown that head,
Whose righteous hand struck England's tyrant dead;
The heroes too, adorn'd with blood and sweat,
Who forced the opposing monster to retreat.

"'Tis force must pull the lawless tyrant down;
But give men knowledge, and the priest's undone;
In vain he whines, in vain he cants and prays,
There's not a man believes one word he says."

The following infamous lines are taken from the anthem for 1694. After describing the "fall of the tyrant," and the satisfaction of the nation, and their own celebration of the event, those bacchanalian revellers are made to sing :—

" Then fill the calf's cranium to a health so divine,
The cause, the old cause, shall ennoble our wine ;
Charge briskly around, fill it up, fill it full,
'Tis the last and best service of a tyrannical skull.
Then to puss, boys, to puss, boys,
Let's drink it off thus, boys," &c.

The anthem for 1695 consists of five verses ; the first, the second, and the fourth verses are too profane and lewd to be reproduced. The following are the third and fifth. After describing the people hurrying to Church on the 30th of January, and asking what is meant by it, the foul-mouthed members sing :—

" Oh ! sir, it is a debt they say,
Mother Church must yearly pay
To her saints' canonisation ;
It is the day in which he fell,
A martyr to the cause of hell,
Justly crown'd with decollation.

" May the banish'd Tarquins' * fate,
Be as just, but not so great ;
Some mean shameful death attend him :
May cursed Lewis, for old sores,
Turn him poorly out of doors ;
Then may some friendly halter end him."

The greater part of the anthem for 1696 is filthy and profane to a horrible degree. The following are the last four lines, and the least exceptionable :—

" Oh ! how should we rejoice and pray, and never cease to sing a,
If bishops too were chased away, and banish'd with their king a,
Then peace and plenty would ensue, our bellies would be full a,
The enliven'd isle would laugh and smile, as in the days of Noll a."

The anthem for 1697 consists of ten verses. The following are the eighth and ninth :—

" They and we this day observing,
Differ only in one thing,
They are canting, whining, starving,
We, rejoicing, drink and sing.

* James II.

" Advance the emblem of the action !
 Fill the calf's skull full of wine ;
 Drinking ne'er was counted faction,
 Men and gods adore the vine."

It is said that the author of these scurrilous productions was Benjamin Bridgewater, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, " whose genius," says Dunton, " was very rich, and ran much upon poetry ; but, alas ! wine and love were his ruin." He was largely rewarded by the Calves-head Club for his profane and lewd effusions.

Assuming the above description of the Calves-head Club to be correct, no wonder that Samuel Wesley was disgusted with its proceedings ; and, though this perhaps scarcely justifies the writing of the letter which was published in 1703, yet, it is some excuse for it. Wesley, in his letter, apologises for writing against a body among whom he was educated, to whom his ancestors belonged, and from whom he had received many personal favours. He declares that he feels no enmity against the party he had left ; that he honoured some of them, and pitied others, but hated none. He states that his purpose is to relate the methods used by Dissenters to propagate a ministry in opposition to the Established Church ; to describe what kind of schools and colleges they have set up, to supersede the necessity of going to the universities ; and to show how these were maintained, what principles they taught, and what sort of arguments they used to confirm their pupils in their dissent, and to hinder them from going over to the communion of the Church.

But now, it may be asked, why was Wesley's letter, after the lapse of so many years, given to the public in a printed form ? It is somewhat difficult to answer this ; and yet there are certain facts which will help to cast light upon it. In 1702, King William died, and Queen Anne, the patroness of the High Church party, succeeded to the throne. The Dissenters, who, for the last thirteen years, had received royal favours, were now the objects of royal abhorrence. Just at this juncture, Samuel Wesley's letter respecting their academies was published. In the same year, 1703, the first part of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion was printed, and dedicated to Queen Anne. In the dedication occurs the following paragraph :—" What can be the meaning of the several seminaries, and, as it were, universities, set up in diverse parts of the kingdom, by more than ordinary industry, contrary to

law, supported by large contributions, where the youth is bred up in principles directly contrary to monarchical and Episcopal government? What can be the meaning of the constant solemnizing by some men, the anniversary of that dismal thirtieth of January, in scandalous and opprobrious feasting and jesting, which the law of the land hath commanded to be perpetually observed in fasting and humiliation? It is humbly submitted to your Majesty whether this does not look like an industrious propagation of the rebellious principles of the last age, and whether it is not necessary that your Majesty should have an eye toward such unaccountable proceedings?"

In 1704, a second part of Clarendon's History was published, with another dedication to the same royal patroness, in which, in reference to the Dissenters, it is said:—"Let them clear themselves of that they were lately charged with before your Majesty, that there are societies of them which celebrate the horrid thirtieth of January, with an execrable solemnity of scandalous mirth; and that they have seminaries, and a sort of universities, in England, maintained by great contributions, where the fiercest doctrines against monarchical and Episcopal government are taught and propagated, and where they bear an implacable hatred to your Majesty's title, name, and family."

In the same year that Samuel Wesley's letter was published, Queen Anne gave her first-fruits and tenths for augmenting the livings of the poorer clergy. In addition to this, the "Occasional Conformity Bill" was passed by the Commons and rejected by the Lords, and created great excitement in the nation. In the House of Peers, "Archbishop Sharpe said he apprehended danger from the increase of Dissenters, and particularly from the many academies set up by them, and moved that the judges might be consulted what laws were in force against such seminaries, and by what means they might be suppressed."*

It becomes an interesting inquiry to ask in what relation Mr Wesley's letter stood to "The Secret History of the Calves-head Club," to the strong language used in the dedicatory preface of Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, to the bounty of Queen Anne, to the "Occasional Conformity Bill," and to the speech of his faithful and affectionate friend, Archbishop Sharpe? This is a question which we cannot answer, but that his letter was deemed

* Calamy's *Life and Times*.

an important one is evident from the attention it attracted, and the excitement it occasioned.*

Most of the facts contained in Mr Wesley's letter have been already given in the third and fourth chapters of this work, and hardly anything can be added here.

One of Wesley's most offensive assertions is that the Dissenters are "a sort of people none of the best-natured in the world," though he admits that "all or most of his relations and acquaintances" belong to that denomination. He adds, that, he was deterred "writing lest he should be thought ungrateful to those from whom, for some years, he received his bread; and also, lest what he said should increase existing animosities." He says he "honours some of the Dissenters and pities others, without hating any." His statements must have been galling; but we are bound to say there is no appearance of an acrimonious spirit. Had his opponents possessed and evinced the same good-tempered moderation, the controversy would not have been so painful and discreditable as what it was.

Samuel Wesley's first and chief antagonist was Samuel Palmer, an Independent minister of some repute, upon whom Dunton lavishes the highest praise. He tells us that he was educated by Dr Kerr, and pursued his studies at the rate of seventeen hours a-day; that his temper was open and sincere, and that he abhorred all trick and flattery; that he was a man of great generosity, very charitable, and very humble; that he never courted the rich, and was always ready to attend the poor; that he preached without

* Burnet, in his *History of His Own Time*, (folio ed., vol. ii. p. 247,) mentions some other important facts belonging to this period. He says, the Dissenters had quarrels and disputes among themselves. The Independents were raising the old Antinomian tenets, and the Presbyterians were accusing the Baptists of giddiness. One Asgil, a member of Parliament, published a book to prove that since believers recovered in Christ all that they lost in Adam, they are now rendered immortal by Christ, and not liable to death. George Keith, who, for thirty-six years, had been the most learned man among the Quakers, now discovered that the Quakers were Deists, and treated the Christian religion as allegorical; upon which he opened a new meeting to convince the Quakers of their errors; and, having failed in doing so, he was reconciled to the Established Church, and entered into holy orders. The clergy also were much divided. Those who were now called the High-Church party, had all along expressed a coldness to the present settlement, and now began to complain about the grievances of the clergy, and the danger the Church was in. Atterbury, who by his great ability and eloquence, had become one of their leaders, attacked the supremacy of the crown in ecclesiastical affairs, and the hot men of the clergy readily entertained his notions.

tes, and that his delivery, voice, and style were excellent; that took great pains with the rising generation, and that his catechetical lectures were plain, easy, and full; that he was well-loved by all the clergy and gentlemen of the Church of England so knew him, and that he was well skilled in law and politics—

“Sum all in him that's good, and learn'd, and great,
Place him in learning's, and in Bates' seat;
He shines in wit, and yet is so sedate,
That none can equal, best but imitate.
In Palmer see, in Palmer all admire,
What nature, books, and honour can inspire.
Were Wesley but impartial, he would own
His learned answer lash'd him to the bone.
A better vindication none could write,
Nor any satire show us half the wit.”*

Samuel Palmer, as Dunton intimates, pursued his academical studies under Dr Kerr, a gentleman of considerable reputation for classical learning, who was first a tutor in Ireland, but was driven thence by the tyranny of the Earl of Tyrconnel, and then settled at Bethnal Green, where he met with great encouragement, and joined several Dissenting ministers, who were ornaments to religion and learning. Palmer entered upon the ministry at Gravenor Chapel, Southwark, in 1698. His first two publications were his replies to Wesley, published respectively in 1703 and 1705, and which were accounted very able performances, and procured the author considerable reputation. Within a year or two after the second of these publications, he, like Wesley, left the Dissenters, and took orders in the Church of England, and had conferred upon him the living of Malden in Essex. It is said that this conversion to the Church of England arose out of his disappointment at not being rewarded according to his apprehended merit by his pamphlets against Wesley. It is further said, that, after he joined the Establishment, he grew lax in his morals until his conduct became scandalous. We are not informed as to the time or place of his decease; but, in 1710 he published an octavo volume, entitled “Moral Essays, founded upon English, Scotch, and Foreign Proverbs.”† Such was Wesley's principal antagonist. Mr Wesley's letter gave the Dissenters great offence, but the reader must not forget the circumstances under which it was

* Dunton's *Life and Errors*.

† *History of Dissenting Churches in London*, by Wilson.

written, and the dishonourable way in which it was afterwards published. About the year 1690, Wesley was introduced to the meeting of the Calves-head Club already mentioned. Rightly or wrongly, Wesley regarded Charles I. as a "royal martyr," for thus he emphatically speaks of him in the dedication he prefixed to his "History of the Old and New Testaments in Verse;" but, at the meeting at which he was now present, the name and memory of Charles were treated with even profane derision and contempt. Is it surprising that this spirited young man should leave the place with a feeling of disgust, and that, in the heat of the moment, he should sit down to write what he had often been solicited to write, an account of the "Education of the Dissenters in their private academies?" He tells us that he began to write his letter as soon as he left the club, and that he finished it before five o'clock next morning. He then went to bed, placing his manuscript beneath his pillow. While he slept, a Dissenting friend, who had seen him thoughtful, came and stealthily took the manuscript away and read it. Such behaviour was highly dishonourable, and can be excused only on the ground of supposing that Wesley and this Dissenter were intimate and confidential friends. Be that as it may, when Wesley awoke and missed his letter, he charged the Dissenter with having it. The purloiner produced the missing manuscript, said he had read it, and that there was nothing in it but what was true. Still he was doubtful respecting the expediency of divulging such revelations, and persuaded Wesley not to send the letter to the person for whom it was intended.

That person was Robert Clavel, a respectable and extensive dealer in books, master of the Company of Stationers, and whom Dr Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, used to call "the honest bookseller." By some means, Clavel became possessed of Wesley's letter. Wesley never intended it for the public eye. He declares that he wrote it as a "private letter to a particular friend, and had not the least thought of its being published." Clavel kept the letter in his private possession for about a dozen years. The Dissenters were rapidly rising into power. The High Church party took alarm, and Queen Anne became a tool for the accomplishment of their purposes. Just at this juncture Clavel, without Wesley's consent, and even without consulting him, took upon himself to print the letter which Wesley, at a single sitting, had written some twelve years before, and, to give it more importance, actually dedi-

cated it to the House of Commons, at that time most hostile to the Dissenters, and eager to do something for their suppression.

What was the result? Wesley's letter was published anonymously, but as it contained a biographical sketch of the early history of the writer, there was no difficulty in detecting the author. Accordingly there appeared, almost immediately, a small quarto pamphlet of twenty-four pages, with the following title :—"A Defence of the Dissenters' Education in their Private Academies, in an answer to Mr W——y's disingenuous and unskilful Reflections upon 'em ; in a Letter to a Noble Lord.—London, 1703." This was by Mr Palmer.

Mr Palmer's defence is full of bitterness. He speaks of Wesley's "impotent malice," "trifling stories," and "unchristian and ungentlemanly insinuations." He says that Wesley's accusation, that Mr Morton's pupils vindicated the murder of Charles I., is "scandalous and false ;" that "the Dissenters universally abhor the king-killing doctrines ;" and that they "have not opposed any king, nor defended any tyrant." He also denies that the Dissenters were "undutiful to the Church and injurious to the Universities ;" for "Dr Owen himself required Wesley to go to the University." He alleges that Wesley, in his letter, has "acted unbecoming a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian ;" that he "has betrayed the private conversations of his best friends, and insulted the works of great and excellent scholars ;" and yet Palmer admits that Wesley's "charges might be true, at least in part ;" but thinks the things "were excusable, considering the provocations the Dissenters received at that period." He says, Wesley "endeavoured, by artful and false insinuations, to expose Dissenters to contempt ;" speaks of his letter as "perfidious ;" and states that he had received "many favours from Dissenters even since he conformed to the Church of England, and that, till the appearance of his invidious letter, the whole Dissenting party expressed for him, on all occasions, universal esteem." He says, Wesley's works "are saved from contempt only by the adorable name of Jesus which they bear, and the lovely memory of that bright saint, the Queen ; both of which names, the best poets think, are injured by his trifling management." Much of this is not only abusive, but false.

Mr Palmer's defence was written at the request of the nobleman to whom it is addressed ; and, besides rude reproaches, contains an account of the academy in which he himself had been

trained for the Christian ministry. Dr Kerr, his tutor, was "a great and polite scholar, a curious critic, a penetrating philosopher, a deep and rational divine, and an accurate historian." He never "heard him make one unhandsome reflection on the Church of England; and he never offered to impose controverted points upon his pupils. No man living could perform academical readings better; and his pupils, in proportion to their number, were equal in learning and virtue to those of any University in Europe."

The course adopted by Dr Kerr was for his students to begin with logic, then proceed to metaphysics, and then to natural philosophy. They disputed every other day, in Latin, upon the several philosophical controversies; and, "on Saturdays, all the superior classes declaimed by turns, four and four, on noble and useful subjects." On Mondays and Fridays they read divinity; and every day, after dinner, they read Greek and Latin authors. They also went through the Greek Testament once a year. Dr Kerr began the scholastic exercises of every morning with public prayer, sometimes in English, and sometimes in Latin. At divinity lectures the eldest pupils prayed, and those of inferior genius were allowed forms of prayer, either of their own composing, or others, as they thought proper. Prayer in the family was most punctually observed, and nine o'clock at night was the latest hour for any pupil to be out of doors. Obscene or profane discourse, if known, would have been punished with expulsion; though Palmer admits that some of the students broke the rules, and gives an account of one or two who became rakes, had to leave, and entered the Established Church. He adds, that the *rule* among Dissenters was for every candidate for the ministry to have five years of preparatory training, and that, before they were recommended to a pastorate, they had to be examined as to learning, probity, and virtue, and to have certificates from their tutors. Such is the substance of Mr Palmer's defence.

In 1704, Mr Wesley replied to this. His second pamphlet is entitled, "A Defence of a Letter concerning the Education of Dissenters in their Private Academies, with a more full and satisfactory account of the same, and of their morals and behaviour towards the Church of England; being an Answer to the Defence of the Dissenters' Education. By Samuel Wesley: London, 1704;" with this remarkable motto—

"Noli irritare crabrones!
'The Kirk's a vixen; don't anger her.'"

The pamphlet consists of sixty-four pages, besides eight of title, preface, and contents.

In his preface, Mr Wesley gives an account of the writing and publication of his former letter, which he solemnly declares was printed without his consent or knowledge.

He then states, that, the reason why he now writes this "Defence" is, because Palmer, by broad inuendos, has charged him with immoral and scandalous practices while he lived among the Dissenters.

Wesley's pamphlet chiefly consists of three parts:—1. The reasons which induced him to write the letter which Clavel had published, and which had "lost him the good graces of his old friends." 2. A consideration of Palmer's defence of his party. 3. A refutation of the scandalous charges brought against himself. The pamphlet is written with great smartness.

In 1705, Palmer published an answer to Wesley's second pamphlet, entitled, "A Vindication of the Learning, Loyalty, Morals, and most Christian Behaviour of the Dissenters towards the Church of England; in answer to Mr Wesley's Defence of his Letter concerning the Dissenters' Education in their Private Academies; and to Mr Sacheverell's injurious Reflections upon them. By Samuel Palmer: London, 1705."

Palmer, in his preface, states that in his former pamphlet he had charged Wesley with giving a perverse and invidious turn to some of the Dissenters' innocent actions; with an ungenerous betrayal of private confidence, by reflecting upon private conversations; with insulting the works of great and excellent scholars; and with base ingratitude to his Dissenting friends. He also speaks most contemptuously of Wesley's reply to his previous production, and says he did not think Wesley was "capable of writing so rash, impertinent, and virulent a piece."

Palmer's vindication, which consists of 115 closely-printed quarto pages, is written with great ability, and is divided into nine chapters. The first is intended to prove that the Dissenters have a right to have private academies. The second shows that such academies are no injury to the prerogatives of Queen Anne, and that their tutors are not guilty of perjury. The third vindicates the ability of such tutors, and assigns reasons why the Dissenters have published so few learned works. The fourth gives the reasons why the Dissenters did not write more against Popery during the reign of James II. The fifth asserts that the prin-

ciples and behaviour of the Dissenters are loyal. The sixth defends the addresses which the Dissenters presented to James II. The seventh justifies the personal and public behaviour of Dissenters towards the Church of England. The eighth vindicates the moral principles and conversation of Dissenters. And the ninth shows the value which Dissenters place upon external worship, upon the sacraments, and upon ordination.

Two years after this, Mr Wesley wrote a long and elaborate reply to this second pamphlet of Mr Palmer's; but, for the present, we must pause in our narrative to glance at other matters now transpiring. It was a period of intense excitement, and the dissenting controversy was the great question of the day.

A few weeks after the accession of Queen Anne, the famous Henry Sacheverell began the war by preaching his furious sermon, at Oxford, on "political union;" in which, says Defoe, "he dooms all Dissenters to destruction, without either bell, book, or candle."* In this celebrated sermon, Sacheverell lays it down as a principle, that "religion and government, Church and State, make up one entire compounded constitution, sharing the same fate and circumstances, twisted and interwoven into the very being and principles of each other, both alike jointly assisting and being assisted; and, like the philosopher's twins, they communicate to each other their mirth or sorrow, and equally suffer or rejoice. A ruined Church and prosperous Government are irreconcilable contradictions in experience, confronted and confuted by the universal testimony of all ages and histories, sacred and profane."† Having attempted to illustrate and to establish this principle, he then makes his doctrine to bear upon English Dissenters, and uses language the most violent. The following are specimens:—

The Dissenters are "a confused swarm of sectarists gathered about the body of the Church of England, not to partake of its communion, but to disturb its peace," (p. 20.)

Men like Tillotson, who were in favour of the scheme for comprehending the Dissenters within the pale of the Established Church, are designated "false and perfidious members, who, under the hypocritical disguise of charity and moderation, would have taken down the fence of the Church of England, and removed its landmark, to make way for men to enter, who would have debauched its doctrines, overrun its discipline, and subverted

* *Inquiry into Occasional Conformity*, by Defoe.

† Sacheverell's *Sermon*, pp. 6, 7.

its constitution. These shuffling, treacherous latitudinarians ought to be stigmatised, and treated equally as dangerous enemies to government, as well as Church," (p. 20.)

Again: "Presbytery and Republicanism go hand in hand. They are but the same disorderly, levelling principles, in the two different branches of our state, equally implacable enemies to monarchy and Episcopacy. They were the same hand that were guilty both of regicide and sacrilege, that divided the king's head and crown, and that made our churches stables and dens of beasts, as well as thieves," (p. 20.)

Again, in reference to Tillotson's comprehension scheme, this firebrand orator exclaims: "And yet this Church must open her injured arms to receive this sly and insidious viper into her bosom. Her sacred enclosures must be laid open, that this boar out of the wood might waste it. Her partition wall must be broken down, and the veil of her temple rent in twain, to make way for that adversary to enter, whom no reason ever yet could convince; no kindness ever yet could win; no condescension ever yet could oblige; and whom nothing but the corruption of our doctrine, the destruction of our discipline, and the sequestration of our estates and revenues, can satisfy," (p. 21.)

"The Dissenting party have more than once been joined with the Papists, in their arms and counsels, as well to extirpate our government as to subvert our Church. They were at first the bastard spawn of Papists, and have ever since been the instruments of their malice, the propagators of their schism, and the panders of that cursed train of mischief, that was originally hatched in a conclave, and afterwards brought forth and nursed up in a conventicle. They are not to be looked upon as a religious sect, but as a political faction in our State, uneasy under its laws, affronting its authority, denying its legal power, endeavouring to supplant its jurisdiction, and to wrest the reins of dominion out of our rulers' hands," (p. 22.)

The fiery preacher thus concludes:—"It is an amazing contradiction to our reason, and the greatest scandal upon our Church, that any, pretending to be her true sons, pillars, and defenders, should turn such apostates and renegadoes to their oaths and professions, such false traitors to their trusts and offices as to strike sail with a party that is such an open and avowed enemy to our communion, and against whom every man that wishes its welfare ought to hang out the *bloody flag* and *banner* of defiance. Is

this the people for whom, at the expense of hazarding our eternal safety, we must give up our ancient faith, constitution, and form of worship? If the Church of England can have no other way of showing her charity than by prostituting her purity, and debauching her religion, I hope they will pardon her if she imitate her blessed Author and Founder, under a temptation not unlike it, who, with scorn and disdain, turned His back upon the devil when he asked Him to fall down and worship him. We must watch against these crafty, faithless, and insidious persons, who can *creep* to our altars, and partake of our sacraments, that they may be *qualified* more secretly and powerfully to undermine us. This is such a religious piece of political hypocrisy as even no heathen government would have endured; and, blessed be God, there is now a person on the throne, who so justly weighs the interest of Church and State as to remove so false an engine that visibly overturns both," (p. 24.)

Such was the way in which the High Church party *began* their campaign, and four months afterwards their representatives, in the House of Commons, brought in and passed their pet "Occasional Conformity Bill."

The Dissenters, at this period, were an influential and important community. They were, generally speaking, men of trade and industry, and the moneyed interests of England were, to a great extent, in their hands. Such was their consequence in the State, that, the parliamentary discussions of the "Occasional Conformity Bill" seriously influenced the money market, and the prices of stocks rose or fell just as the bill was likely to be passed or to be rejected.* And yet, notwithstanding their number and importance, they were, with a few exceptions, extremely reasonable in their demands. Defoe, himself a Dissenter,† expounds them in a pamphlet published at the time, and we presume that his exposition may be considered tolerably correct and just. He suggests that if Dissenters are to be excluded from all places of profit, trust, and honour, they ought to be excused from all places attended with charge, trouble, and loss of time; that if a Dissenter be pressed as a sailor to fight at sea, or be enlisted as a soldier to fight on shore, he ought not to be declared incapable of preferment; and that if Dissenters must not only maintain their own

* Defoe's *Dissenters' Answer to the High Church Challenge*.

† Defoe's *Letter to John Howe*.

clergy and their own poor, but also join in maintaining the clergy and the poor of the Established Church,—if they must pay the same taxes and the same duties that Churchmen pay, it is somewhat hard that they are to be treated with so much suspicion as not to be thought worthy of being trusted to set a drunkard in the stocks.*

Defoe further declares, that, so far as it respects himself, he has not the least objection to the "Occasional Conformity Bill" becoming law. He has no notion of "Christians of an amphibious nature, who have such preposterous consciences that they can believe one way of worship to be right, and yet serve God another way themselves. This is a strange thing in Israel! It is like a ship with her sails set, some back and some full. It is like a workman that builds with one hand, and pulls down with another. It is like everything which signifies nothing. To say that a man can be of two religions is a contradiction, unless there be two Gods to worship, or he has two souls to save. If it be unlawful for me to dissent, I ought to conform; but if it be unlawful for me to conform, I must dissent. To say that you take the sacrament as a *civil act* in a church, and as a *religious act* in a chapel, is *playing bo-peep* with God Almighty."†

Such were the sentiments of Defoe, and he declares that nine-tenths of the Dissenters, numbering altogether about two millions, entertained the same opinions.‡ All he asks for is, what the Queen had recommended to parliament, peace and union. In such a case, "the concerns of conscience would never make a rupture in civil society; men would be gentlemen as well as Christians; they would be Dissenters, and yet not Dissenters; and there would be conformity in civil ceremonies, though none in religious. This would make the devil out of love with the English climate, and the people would get to heaven with the less interruption."§

Defoe was very far from being one of the mildest and most moderate of Dissenters; and yet, who can carp at sentiments like these?

There can be no doubt that blackguards, calling themselves Dissenters, annually joined in the profane, bacchanalian revelries of the Calves-head Club; but, on the other hand, it is equally

* Defoe's *Inquiry into Occasional Conformity*.

† *Ibid.*

‡ Defoe's *Dissenter Misrepresented*.

§ Defoe's *Challenge of Peace*.

certain that some of the High Church party, with a direct reference to the death of King William being said to have been immediately occasioned by his horse stumbling over a mole-hill, were accustomed to drink a health to the "little gentleman dressed in velvet,"* and to the horse which so fatally stumbled over the insignificant heap of earth that had been raised by his proboscis.†

Defoe complains that the same party "endeavoured, by calumny and reproach, to blacken the Dissenters with crimes of which they were innocent;"‡ that "railing pamphlets, buffooning them and dressing them up in the bear's skin for all the dogs in the street to bait them," were published; "and that railing sermons, exciting the people to hate them," were preached. He says "they were threatened with the repeal of the Toleration Act, blackened with slanders, and bullied with bloody flags, defiance, and Billingsgate language from the press and from the pulpit; their meeting houses were represented as houses of sedition, and they daily suffered from the indignities of harebrained priests, buffooning poets, and clubs of insolent pamphleteers."§

What was the result of all this? The greatest bitterness was created, and pamphlets, full of scurrility and violence, literally swarmed. Among the writers of these productions, Daniel Defoe was the most eminent. The pamphlet which, above all others, occasioned the greatest commotion, was his "Shortest Way with Dissenters; or, Proposals for the Establishment of the Church." This was published anonymously, and pretended to be written by one of the High Church party, and to set forth their complaints and wishes. The Church is said to have harboured Dissenters too long, and to have nourished the viperous brood till they hissed and flew in the face of the mother that had cherished them. The Church had been huffed and bullied by the Act of Toleration, and canting synagogues had been set up at its very doors. The Dissenters had butchered one king, deposed another, and made a mock monarch of a third, and yet expected to be employed by the fourth. If James I. had sent all the Puritans in England away to the West Indies, the Church of England would have been kept undivided and entire; but these Puritans, to requite the lenity of the father, took up arms against the son, put to death God's

* Chadwick's *Life of Defoe*, p. 144.

‡ *Inquiry into Occasional Conformity*.

† Defoe's *Mock Mourner*.

§ Defoe's *Challenge of Peace*.

anointed, and set up a sordid impostor who had neither the title nor the understanding to manage the nation. Coming into power, they shared the church lands among their soldiers, and turned the clergy out to starve. During the reign of their own King William, they had crept into all places of trust and profit, and had been preferred to the highest posts in England ; while, in Scotland, they had trampled down the sacred orders, suppressed the Episcopacy, and made an entire conquest of the Church. For such reasons, they ought to be rooted out from the face of the land, and never would the nation enjoy uninterrupted union and tranquillity till their spirit of Whiggism, faction, and schism were melted down like the old money. It was true, that Queen Anne had promised them toleration, but she had also promised to protect and defend the Church ; and if she could not effectually do that without the destruction of the Dissenters, she must, of course, dispense with one promise in order to fulfil the other. The Parliament, protected and encouraged by a Church of England queen, had now the opportunity to suppress the spirit of enthusiasm, and to free the nation from the vipers that had so long sucked the blood of their mother. If they were permitted to remain, they would corrupt posterity, plunder the estates of the members of the Church, drag their persons to gaols, gibbets, and scaffolds, and swallow up the Church itself in schism, faction, and enthusiasm. If one severe law were made and executed, that all found at a conventicle should be transported, and their preacher be hanged, they would soon all come to church, and an age would make all parties one again. Why should an enthusiast be less a criminal than a Jesuit ? Why should the Papist, with his seven sacraments, be worse than a Quaker, with no sacrament at all ? Why should religious houses be more intolerable than meeting-houses ? What with Popery on the one hand, and schismatics on the other, the Church of England had been crucified between two thieves. Now, let the thieves be crucified, and let the foundations of the Church be established on the destruction of her enemies.

Such is the substance of Defoe's notorious pamphlet. For a time, and to some extent, the High Church party believed it to be a genuine production ; and one of them, in a letter, declared that, next to the Holy Bible and Sacred Comments, it was the most valuable thing that his library contained, and he earnestly prayed that God would put it into the heart of Queen Anne to carry its

proposals into execution.* It is certain that there was nothing in Defoe's pamphlet but what had been substantially enunciated from scores of High Church pulpits ; but now that it was published, and a national commotion was created, and especially, as soon as it was suspected that the writer was not a Churchman, but a despicable Dissenter, there was a pretence of the most terrible indignation, and threats of the severest punishment to be inflicted upon the audacious author.

Defoe was suspected, and had to flee for safety. He was advertised in the *London Gazette*, and £50 was offered by Government for his apprehension. The advertisement describes him as "a middle-sized, spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark-brown coloured hair, but wears a wig ; has a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes, and a large mole near his mouth." This advertisement is dated January 10, 1703, the year in which Wesley's letter was published.

Six weeks after, the House of Commons passed a resolution, "That this book (Defoe's) being full of false and scandalous reflections on parliament, and tending to promote sedition, be burnt by the hands of the common hangman in New Palace Yard."

Meantime, Defoe was arrested, and, in July 1703, was brought to trial. His sentence was to pay a fine to the Queen of two hundred marks ; to stand three times in the pillory ; to be imprisoned during the Queen's pleasure, and to find sureties for his good behaviour for seven years.

In accordance with this sentence, on July 29, Defoe was placed in the pillory before the Royal Exchange ; on July 30, near the Conduit in Cheapside ; and on July 31, at Temple Bar. Such pillory exhibitions had seldom been witnessed. On each of the three days, thousands of sympathisers accompanied the condemned scribe from Newgate prison to his place of shame, to protect him from hurt or insult, whilst his very pillory was hung with garlands woven by the fingers of his friends.

The pen of Defoe was never plied more busily than while he was in prison. He wrote more church defiances during his year of confinement in Newgate than in any other year of his chequered life. Other persons were equally busy, and in all forms of pamphlet, tract, and broadsheet, the press poured forth its volumes of contention. All classes of society seemed to catch the conta-

* Defoe's *Dissenters' Answer*.

gion. Dean Swift, in London at the time, declared that the contention between Church and Dissent was so universal, that the dogs in the streets took it up, and the cats debated the question by night on the tops of the houses ; yea, the very ladies were so split asunder into High Church and Low Church, and were so warm in their disputes, as to have no time to say their prayers.

It was in the midst of this excitement that Samuel Wesley's letter was published by Clavel, and that his controversy with Palmer took place.

But besides having Palmer for an antagonist, Wesley was attacked by his old schoolfellow, the redoubtable Daniel Defoe. This was in a pamphlet published in 1704, and which was probably written in Newgate prison. It was entitled "More Short Ways with the Dissenters." The Queen having been obliged to dismiss her High Church Cabinet, on account of the storm that had been raised by their attempts to pass the "Occasional Conformity Bill," and thereby to suppress the Dissenters, Defoe alleges that now another scheme was being concocted for the accomplishment of the self-same purpose. The "new attempt struck at the root of the Dissenters' interest. It would effectually destroy the succession of them in the nation ; for it was intended to prevent them educating their children in their own opinions.

He then adds, in reference to Wesley, "If I should say that a mercenary renegado was hired to expose the private academies of the Dissenters, as nurseries of rebellious principles, I should say nothing but what is in too many mouths to remain a secret. The Reverend Mr Wesley, author of two pamphlets calculated to blacken our education in the academies of the Dissenters, ingenuously confesses himself guilty of many crimes in his youth, and is the willingest to confess them, as he would lay them at the door of the Dissenters and their schools, among whom he was educated ; though I humbly conceive, it is no more a proof of the immorality of the Dissenters in their schools *that he was a little rakish among them*, or that he found others among them like himself, than the hanging five students of Cambridge, for robbing on the highway, should prove that padding is a science taught in that university. He takes a great deal of pains to prove, that in these academies were or are taught anti-monarchical principles ; but the author of these sheets happens to be one that was educated under the same master that he was taught by, viz., Mr Charles Morton of

Newington Green ; and I have now by me the manuscripts of science, the exercises of Mr Morton's school, and, among the rest, those of politics in particular ; and I must do that learned gentleman's memory the justice to affirm, that neither in his system of politics, government, and discipline, nor in any other of the exercises of his school, was there anything taught or encouraged that was antimonarchical, or destructive to the government or constitution of England. Allow, then, that Mr Wesley fell into ill company afterwards ; allow we had, and still have worse rakes among us than himself, does this prove that our schools teach men thus, and that the Dissenters, in general, profess principles destructive of monarchy ?"

Defoe then proceeds to say, that the reason why Dissenters have erected and opened private academies, to teach their children by themselves, is because the Church party, by imposing unreasonable terms, have shut them out of theirs. He states that, if they will admit the youth of the Dissenters into their universities, without imposing upon them unfair oaths and obligations, the Dissenters, though objecting to "university morals, as to the *trifles of drunkenness and lewdness*," yet, would engage to have always as many as two thousand of their young people students in these seats of learning.

The remainder of Defoe's pamphlet is devoted to a violent refutation of Sacheverell's second sermon at Oxford ; a sermon in which, he declares, there are fourteen positive untruths, to the reproach of the preacher's coat, and the scandal of his ministerial function.

Mr Wesley, in his first reply to Mr Palmer, used the Latin line as his motto, *Noli irritare crabones*. He wished not to irritate the wasps ; but whether he wished it or not, the thing itself was done. We have seen what Palmer and Defoe say of him and of his unlucky letter ; and, we are bound to add, that others have been not less pointed and severe. Dunton writes—"Mr Wesley's first piece was a most unkind satire. The world had not known him unless he had thought to make himself public. I am afraid Mr Wesley's vein has almost spent itself ; the dregs come the last. His taxing the morals and behaviour of the Dissenting ministers was a malicious falsehood, published on purpose to carry favour with the High Flyers, and to enlarge his preferments." Chadwick, in his Life of Defoe, broadly asserts that Samuel Wesley himself published his letter respecting dissenting academies ; and

that his traducing the Dissenters "was intended, through the royal patronage, to send this time-serving flatterer into the archbishopric of Canterbury, upon the back of that unprincipled miscreant, Dr Sacheverell." Milner, in his "Life and Times of Dr Isaac Watts," observes—"It is difficult to shield Mr Wesley from the charge of seeking to further the designs of tyranny by private slander; and of endeavouring to enlarge a scanty income by gratifying the heads of the Church, in vilifying the seceders from its communion. There is too much reason to fear that hopes of preferment led him to join the party of Sacheverell in the work of abuse and defamation. Mr Southey says, the reason why he left the Dissenters, was his falling in with bigoted and ferocious men, who defended the execution of King Charles, and shocked and disgusted him by their Calves-head Club. The only authority for this extraordinary assertion is the evidence of Samuel Wesley, the younger, a violent Jacobite; and Mr Southey introduces the statement into his pages as if no suspicion was to be entertained of the truth of the facts it expresses. It may be true that Mr Wesley was a member of the Calves-head Club; it may be true that he frequented the blind alley, near Moorfields, on the 30th of January; but it is not true that any other cause beside his own imprudence introduced him into such society; it is not true that the scenes he there witnessed led to his secession from the Dissenters; for they had no more to do with such disgraceful proceedings than their accusers; so that, the only inference we can derive from the representation of Mr Southey is, that the elder Wesley, in his youth, associated with a band of profligates; and, as extremes in politics often meet, the furious republican became at last a blind worshipper of the royal prerogative."

In these extracts, the reader has before him the substance of all the charges which Dissenting ignorance and hatred have brought against the character of this venerable man. It is scarce worth while to refute them; for they are all in flat contradiction to the facts published in the previous pages of this narrative; and yet, perhaps, a brief reply may be of service:—

CHARGES.

Defoe says that Wesley was a "mercenary renegade."

ANSWERS.

Defoe gave utterance to a malicious slander; in support of which he does not even attempt to adduce the slightest evidence.

Defoe says that Wesley was hired to expose the private academies of Dissenters.

Defoe says that Wesley ingenuously confesses himself guilty of many crimes in his youth; and that he was a little rakish while he was among the Dissenters.

Defoe says Mr Morton never taught antimonarchical principles.

Defoe meanly insinuates that Mr Wesley fell into ill company after he left the Dissenters.

Leaving Defoe, turn to Dunton. The latter says that Wesley's letter "taxing the morals and behaviour of Dissenting ministers was a malicious falsehood."

Dunton says that Wesley published the letter "to curry favour with the High Flyers, and to enlarge his preferment."

Whitland says Wesley published the letter himself.

Whitland says Wesley traduced the Dissenters in order to become Archbishop of Canterbury.

Milton accuses Wesley of seeking to excite the passions of the people.

Who hired him? What was his remuneration? This also is an unfounded assertion, unsupported by a single particle of proof.

All that Mr Wesley acknowledges is, that he wrote some "silly lampoons on Church and State," at the instigation and urgent request of some Dissenting ministers, who ought to have known better than expose a youth from the country to such temptations. He further maintains that if he was not an "exemplary liver" while with the Dissenters, he was, at least, not a "scandalous one."

Mr Wesley says the same; and also adds, that whenever Mr Morton heard any of his pupils talking disaffectedly, or disloyally, he never failed to rebuke them.

We have no account of his being in any ill company after he left the Dissenters, except on one occasion, when he was in company with a number of Dissenting scoffers at the Calves-head Club.

The Dissenter who purloined the manuscript from under Wesley's pillow while he slept, and then dishonourably read it, freely acknowledged that there was nothing in the letter but what was true.

Mr Wesley did not publish it at all. That was done by Mr Clavel, who published it without either Wesley's consent or knowledge. Besides, so far from it being intended to "curry favour with the High Flyers," it was written at a time when Wesley undeniably belonged to the Low Church party, the head of which was the man he so greatly praised two or three years afterwards, viz., Archbishop Tillotson.

That is an unblushing falsehood.

This provokes a smile, but is too absurd to deserve a serious answer.

Mr Wesley was an enemy of tyrants. Witness what he said when James II. exhibited his tyranny at Oxford.

Milner says that Wesley "endeavoured to enlarge a scanty income by gratifying the heads of the Church in vilifying the seceders from its communion."

Milner says there is reason to fear that hopes of preferment led him to join the party of Sacheverell.

Milner says that Samuel Wesley, jun., was a violent Jacobite.

Milner says that Samuel Wesley, jun., is the only authority attesting the truthfulness of the story about the Calves-head Club.

Milner dishonourably insinuates that "it may be true that Wesley was a member of the Calves-head Club, and that he frequented its meetings on the 30th of January."

Milner says it was his own imprudence that introduced him into such society.

Milner says it is not true that the scene at the Calves-head Club was the cause of his leaving the Dissenters.

Milner says that he infers that Wesley, in his youth, "associated with a band of profligates."

Milner says the Dissenters had no more to do with the disgraceful proceedings of the Calves-head Club than their accusers had.

Mr Wesley never intended his letter to be even seen by the heads of the Church; much less hoped that, through them, it would be the means of enlarging his scanty income.

Where is the reason to be found?

Samuel Wesley's brother John says, "he was no more a Jacobite than he was a Turk." (See *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1785, page 246.)

Nay; the story is recited by Samuel Wesley, sen., in the *Defence of his Letter*, published by himself, in 1704.

When Mr Milner wrote this, he knew that Mr Wesley was not a member of the club; and that, so far from frequenting its meetings, he was never there but once, and then he came away disgusted.

Perhaps it was imprudent for him to have been in such a disreputable place; but he left it, "indignant at the villainous principles and practices" he had witnessed: and never went again.

No one says it was. He left the Dissenters years before this. But, if the scene at the Calves-head Club was not the cause of his leaving the Dissenters, it was the cause of his writing his letter respecting Dissenting Academies.

The only band of profligates with whom Wesley associated in his youth were the profligates at the Dissenting academies, and, in one instance, a band of profligates at the Calves-head Club, who called themselves Dissenters.

We do not, for a single moment, entertain the thought that the Calves-head Club had the approbation of the Dissenters as a whole, or of even any considerable minority; but still, there cannot be a doubt that the members of the club were men who considered themselves Dissenters, notwithstanding their utter unfitness to be members of any Dissenting Church.

We have thus fully stated all the hard things which Mr Wes-

ley's enemies have thought fit to say against him, and, in this summary way, have replied to them. Those who wish for further refutations must refer again to the pages they have already read. Defoe's accusation is calumnious slander of the worst description. Chadwick is a man whose vulgar ravings are hardly worthy of being noticed. The life of a man like Dr Watts is blurred and blotted by such utterly false, if not malignant, charges as those which the writer has brought against Mr Wesley. We have no quarrel with Mr Milner on account of his attempt to show that the Calves-head Club was an infamous association, which the Dissenting body, as a whole, condemned ; but he had no right to impeach the veracity of Mr Wesley, and, by a mean insinuation, to try to cast upon him the disgrace of the possibility that he himself was a member of this godless gang. That is an ungenerous reproach, which none but an irritated man would have ventured to employ. The barbarous Calves-head Club was a disgraceful association, of which the great bulk of the Dissenters totally disapproved ; for it is cheerfully acknowledged that some classes of the Dissenters were deeply averse to the murder of King Charles I., and were among the first to welcome his son Charles II., to the English monarchy ; but while all this is most readily allowed, we submit that this is no refutation of the statement that the members of that abominable club declared themselves to be Dissenters ; nor is it any excuse for Mr Milner's attack on Mr Wesley's veracity, and especially for his unworthy suggestion that Mr Wesley himself might be an associate of the profligate fellows of which the Calves-head Club consisted.

Believing Mr Wesley to be unimpeachable in the painful business that has been here discussed, and feeling that his character and rank in society make it of some importance to keep his fair fame without a blot, we offer no apology for this lengthened, and, perhaps, tedious chapter in his history. Dr Adam Clarke sums up the whole in terms to which we find it impossible to assent. He writes : " In the heat of his zeal for the Church, after his conversion from dissenting principles, Mr Samuel Wesley, in his controversial writings, often overstepped the bounds of Christian moderation." Did he ? We have read the whole of his controversial writings ; and, finding no proof of this, we respectfully doubt it.

CHAPTER XV.

THE IMPRISONED FATHER.—1705-1709.

It was about this period of Mr Wesley's history that he wished and proposed to go as a missionary to the East Indies. The only English missionary society then existing was the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This society was instituted by King William III. in 1701, and had for its object the maintenance of clergymen in the British plantations, colonies, and factories. It was managed by a board of ninety persons, including the two archbishops, several bishops, and a number of the nobility, gentry, and clergy.

Mr Wesley's scheme was threefold. First, he proposed to inquire into the state of English colonists, in all the English factories and settlements, from St Helena to India and China; travelling wherever it was possible to travel, either by land or sea; and where that could not be done, making the same inquiry by means of correspondence from Surat, which he seems to have intended to be his place of residence. He wished to inquire into the number of the English colonists, their morals, and their ministers; and to revive among them the spirit of Christianity, by catechising, by good books, and by other means of the same description.

The second part of his scheme had reference to other Churches. He would endeavour to open a correspondence with the Church of Abyssinia, or, if the English board of management thought fit, he would try to pierce into that country himself. He would also personally inquire into the state of the poor Christians of St Thomas, who were scattered all over India, and would settle a correspondence between them and the Church of England. He also proposed to convey Protestant books among the Roman Catholics, translated into the language of the countries where he found them dwelling.

Then, in the third place, he would exert himself to benefit the

against my own house; the noise kept his nurse waking till one or two in the morning. Then they left off; and the nurse being heavy to sleep, overlaid the child. She waked, and finding it dead, ran with it to my house almost distracted, and calling my servants, threw it into their arms. They, as wise as she, ran up with it to my wife, and, before she was well awake, threw it cold and dead into hers. She composed herself as well as she could, and that day got it buried.

"A clergyman met me in (Lincoln) Castle yard, and told me to withdraw, for the isle men intended me a mischief. Another told me he had heard near twenty of them say, 'If they got me in the castle yard they would squeeze my guts out.' My servant had the same advice. I went by Gainsborough, and God preserved me.

"When they knew I was got home they sent the drum and mob, with guns, &c., as usual, to compliment me till after midnight. One of them passing by on Friday evening, and seeing my children in the yard, cried out, 'O ye devils! we will come and turn ye all out of doors a begging shortly.' God convert them and forgive them!

"All this, thank God, does not in the least sink my wife's spirits. For my own, I feel them disturbed and disordered; but, for all that, I am going on with my reply to Palmer, which, whether I am in prison or out of it, I hope to get finished by the next session of parliament, for I have now no more regiments to lose."

What had Wesley done to deserve outrages like these? He had withdrawn his promise to vote for Whichcott, the Dissenters' candidate, because the Dissenters, for election purposes, began to abuse the Church, the clergy, and the memory of Charles I. And, secondly, he had "concerned himself in the election of the county, which he thought he had as much right to do as any other freeholder."* For this claim of freedom to vote as he thought proper, the professed friends of freedom deemed it their duty to subject him and his family to all this insult and injury. Is it surprising that, after this, Samuel Wesley should look askance upon his old friends, the Dissenters; and that, to some extent, he should, as *Wesleyan* biographers have stated, ally himself to the opponents of Dissenters, the "High Flyers" of the Church of England?

* Kirk's *Mother of the Wesleys*, p. 89, 90.

In the last sentence of the foregoing letter, there is an expression which must be noticed. Wesley says, "I have no more regiments to lose." An explanation will be found in the following narrative :—

For above thirty years, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, had pursued the military life with amazing ability and success. He had married Sarah Jennings, the companion of Princess Anne. On the accession of Anne, he was appointed captain-general of the forces at home and abroad, with an allowance of £10,000 a year. After a succession of marvellous victories, he fought and won the battle of Blenheim, in August 1704. In this battle, the French and Bavarians lost nearly forty thousand men, or about two-thirds of their entire army. Thirteen thousand were made prisoners, among whom were twelve hundred officers. Ten French battalions were wholly cut to pieces; and thirty squadrons of horse and dragoons were forced into the Danube, most of whom were drowned. Marlborough took above one hundred cannon, twenty-four mortars, one hundred and twenty-nine colours, one hundred and seventy-one standards, seventeen pair of kettle-drums, three thousand six hundred tents, thirty-four coaches, three hundred laden mules, two bridges of boats, fourteen pontoons, and eight casks of silver. His loss in killed and wounded was twelve thousand. The hero received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament; the city entertained him with a splendid feast; the colours taken from the enemy were paraded from one extremity of London to the other; the Queen gave to him and to his heirs for ever the manor of Woodstock and the hundred of Wootton, and caused a palace, Blenheim House, to be built for him. His prime fault was his avarice. "The desire of accumulating money," says John Wesley, "attended him in all his triumphs, and threw a stain upon his character. In the whole, he received above £523,000 of the public money, which he never accounted for, and probably received some millions by plunder and presents."* He died in 1722.

Such was the man whose exploits Samuel Wesley celebrated in 1705. His poem is a folio pamphlet of twelve pages, and is "dedicated to the Right Honourable Master Godolphin." With one or two exceptions, perhaps this is the most finished poem that Samuel Wesley ever wrote. It consists of five hundred and twenty-six lines, many of them containing beauties of the highest order.

* Wesley's *History of England*.

In consequence of this poem, the Duke of Marlborough made him chaplain to Colonel Lepelle's regiment, which was to stay in England for some time ; and a nobleman sent for him to London, promising to procure him a prebend. All this, however, happened while he was in the midst of his controversy with Mr Palmer, and the result was, his old friends, the irritated Dissenters, who had powerful influence both in parliament and at court, succeeded in preventing him obtaining the cathedral appointment; and, also, soon worked him out of the military chaplainship, which was actually given him.*

It is to the last of these mean and revengeful actions he refers when, in the foregoing letter, he remarks "I have no more regiments to lose."

Samuel Wesley's dissenting controversy involved him and his family in terrible trials. Some have been related, others yet remain. The following letter to Archbishop Sharpe was written within a month after the general election :—

" LINCOLN CASTLE, June 25, 1705.

" MY LORD,—Now I am at rest, for I have come to the haven where I have long expected to be. On Friday last, when I had been christening a child at Epworth, I was arrested in my churchyard by one who had been my servant and gathered my tithe last year, at the suit of one of Mr Whichcott's relations and zealous friends, (Mr Pinder,) according to their promise, when they were in the isle, before the election. The sum was not £30 ; but it was as good as five hundred. Now, they knew the burning of my flax, my London journey, and their throwing me out of my regiment, had both sunk my credit and exhausted my money. My adversary was sent to when I was on the road, to meet me, that I might make some proposals to him. But all his answer was that, 'I must immediately pay the whole sum or go to prison.' Thither I went with no great concern for myself, and find much more civility and satisfaction here than in *beribus gyaris* of my own Epworth. I thank God, my wife was pretty well recovered, and was churched some days before I was taken from her ; and I hope she will be able to look to my family, if they do not turn them out of doors, as they have often threatened to do. One of my biggest concerns was my being forced to leave my poor lambs in the midst of so

* Whitehead's *Life of John and Charles Wesley*.

many wolves. But the Great Shepherd is able to provide for them, and to preserve them. My wife bears it with that courage which becomes her, and which I expected from her.

"I do not despair of doing some good here, and it may be, I shall do more in this new parish than in my old one; for I have leave to read prayers every morning and afternoon in the prison, and to preach once a Sunday, which I choose to do in the afternoon, when there is no sermon at the minster. I am getting acquainted with my brother gaol-birds as fast as I can, and shall write to London next post, to the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, who, I hope, will send me some books to distribute among them.

"I should not write these things from a gaol if I thought your Grace would believe me ever the less for my being here; where, if I should lay my bones, I would bless God and pray for your Grace.—Your Grace's very obliged and most humble servant,

"S. WESLEY."

Five days afterwards, the good archbishop wrote a sympathising letter; but, at the same time, stated what he had heard against him. This letter Mr Wesley answered; gave a satisfactory account of all his affairs, and showed that the reports which had reached the archbishop were perfectly false, and adduced proof of this. He then continues his letter as follows:—

"LINCOLN CASTLE, *July 10, 1705.*

"MY LORD,—I am not forgotten, neither by God nor by your lordship. My debts are about £300, which I have contracted by a series of misfortunes not unknown to your Grace. The falling of my parsonage barn before I had recovered the taking my living; the burning of a great part of my dwelling-house about two years since, and all my flax last winter; the fall of my income nearly one-half, by the low prices of grain; the almost entire failure of my flax this year, which used to be the better half of my revenue; together with my numerous family, and the taking this regiment from me, which I had obtained with so much expense and trouble,—have at last crushed me, though I struggled as long as I was able. Yet I hope to rise again, as I have always done when at the lowest; and I think I cannot be much lower now.

"Do not be in haste to credit what they report of me, for really

lies are the manufacture of the party; and they have raised so many against me, and spread them so wide, that I am sometimes tempted to print my case in my own vindication."

The party whom Wesley had opposed had prevented him obtaining a prebend, had wrested from him a regimental chaplaincy, had indirectly occasioned the death of his infant child, had loaded him with obloquy, and had cast him into prison. Surely this was punishment enough for the publication of his unlucky letter, and his two pamphlets in defence of it, and for the vote which he had given at the general election of 1765. But not so. Two months after writing the foregoing letter, he poured fresh sorrows into the ear of his friend, the archbishop. He writes:—

"LINCOLN CASTLE, Sept. 12, 1706.

"MY LORD,—It is happy for me that your Grace has entertained no ill opinion of me, and will not alter what you have entertained without reason. But it is still happier that I serve a Master who cannot be deceived, and who, I am sure, will never forsake me. A jail is a paradise in comparison of the life I led before I came hither. No man has worked truer for bread than I have done, and few have lived harder, or their families either. I am grown weary of vindicating myself; not, I thank God, that my spirits sink, or that I have not right on my side, but because I have almost a whole world against me; and therefore shall, in the main, leave my cause to the righteous Judge.

"A few weeks ago, in the night, since I came hither, my enemies stabbed my cows, endeavouring thereby to starve my forlorn family in my absence; my cows being all dried by it, which was their chief subsistence; though I hope they had not the power to kill any of them outright.

"After it was done, to divert the cry of the world against them, they spread a report that my own brawn (boar) did this mischief; though at first they said my cows ran against a scythe and wounded themselves.

"As for the brawn, any impartial jury would bring him in not guilty, on hearing the evidence. There were three cows all wounded at the same time, one of them in three places; the biggest was a flesh wound, not slanting, but directly in towards the heart, which it only missed by glancing outward on the rib. It was nine inches deep; whereas the brawn's tusks were hardly two

inches long. All conclude that the work was done with a sword, by the breadth and shape of the orifice.

"The same night the iron latch of my door was twined off, and the wood hacked in order to shoot back the lock, which nobody will think was with an intention to rob my family. My house-dog, who made a huge noise within doors, was sufficiently punished for his want of politics and moderation; for, the next day but one, his leg was almost chopped off by an unknown hand.

"It is not every one that could bear these things: but, I bless God, my wife is less concerned with suffering them than I am in the writing, or than I believe your Grace will be in reading them. She is not what she is represented, any more than I am. I believe it was this foul beast of a worse-than-Erymanthean boar, already mentioned, who fired my flax by rubbing his tusks against the wall; but that was no great matter, since it is now reported I had but £5 loss.

"O my lord! I once more repeat it, that I shall sometime have a more equal Judge than any in this world.

"Most of my friends advise me to leave Epworth, if ever I should get from hence. I confess I am not of that mind, because I may yet do good there; and it is like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fire thick upon me. They have only wounded me yet, and, I believe, cannot kill me. I hope to be at home at Christmas. God help my poor family! For myself, I have but one life, but while that lasts, shall be your Grace's ever obliged and most humble servant,

S. WESLEY."

Such were the sufferings inflicted by unrelenting enemies upon a man with a sickly wife and eight young children. Such conduct was outrageous, and admits of no excuse. Five days after the above letter was sent off, the poor prisoner wrote another to the same excellent archbishop:—

"LINCOLN CASTLE, Sept. 17, 1706.

"MY LORD,—I am so full of God's mercies that neither my eyes nor my heart can hold them. When I came hither, my stock was but little above ten shillings, and my wife's at home scarce so much. She soon sent me her rings, because she had nothing else to relieve me with; but I returned them, and God soon provided for me. The most of those who have been my

benefactors keep themselves concealed. But they are all known to Him who first put in *their* hearts to show me so much kindness; and I beg your Grace to assist me to praise God for it, and to pray for His blessing upon them.

"This day I have received a letter from Mr Hoar, that he has paid £25. which he has received from me. He adds that 'a very great man has just sent them £30 more;' he mentions not his name, though surely it must be my patron. I find I walk a deal lighter: and I hope I shall sleep better now that these sums are paid, which will make almost half my debts. I am a bad beggar, and worse at returning formal thanks: but I can heartily pray for my benefactors; and I hope I shall do it while I live, and so long beg to be esteemed, your Grace's most obliged, and thankful humble servant,

SAM. WESLEY."

It is uncertain how much longer Mr Wesley was kept in Lincoln Castle; but four months after this he was once more at his home at Epworth. Archbishop Sharpe and others were extremely kind, and the following additional anecdote of his Grace's thoughtful sympathy, deserves insertion. Mrs Wesley writes:—"When my master was in Lincoln Castle, the late Archbishop of York said to me, 'Tell me, Mrs Wesley, whether you ever really wanted bread?' My lord, said I, I will freely own to your Grace that, strictly speaking, I never did want bread. But then, I had so much care to get it before it was ate, and to pay for it after, as has often made it very unpleasant to me. And I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to having none at all. 'You are certainly in the right,' replied his lordship, who seemed for a while very thoughtful. Next morning he made me a handsome present; nor did he ever repent having done so. On the contrary, I have reason to believe it afforded him comfortable reflections before his death."*

Thus wrote Susannah Wesley respecting one of her husband's friends. Hear what she says respecting one of his enemies. "Last Thursday, (May 1706,) a very sad accident happened here. Robert Darwin, a man of this town, was at Bawtry Fair, where he got drunk; and, riding homeward down a hill, his horse came down with him, and he fell with his face to the ground, and put his neck out of joint. Those with him immediately pulled it in

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 391.

again, and he lived till next day ; but he never spoke more. His face was torn all to pieces, one of his eyes beat out, his under lip cut off, and his nose broken down. In short, he was one of the dreadfullest examples of the severe justice of God that I have known. This man, as he was one of the richest in this place, (Epworth,) so he was one of the most implacable enemies your father had among his parishioners ; one that insulted him most basely in his troubles, one that was ready to do him all the mischief he could ; not to mention his affronts to me and the children, and how heartily he wished to see our ruin. This man, and one more, have been now cut off, in the midst of their sins, since your father's confinement."*

The heroic wife, during the rector's imprisonment, evinced fortitude, fidelity, and love, worthy of herself. Money she had none, —not a coin ; the household lived on bread and milk, the produce of the Epworth glebe ; but she did what she could to help her husband in his strait ;—she sent him her little articles of jewellery, including her wedding-ring ; but these he sent her back, as things far too sacred to be used in relieving his necessities. Brave-hearted couple ! The wife did her duty ; but the husband's soul was far too noble to avail himself of such a sacrifice.

In his "Pious Communicant," published in 1700, Samuel Wesley puts into the reader's mouth a beautiful prayer, which he had doubtless often offered on his own behalf, and which, in his present circumstances, was peculiarly appropriate. The prayer, for itself, is worth preserving ; and, in a narrative like this, is of some importance, as illustrating the thoroughly devout and Christian spirit of this much-tried godly minister. It is as follows :—

" A PRAYER FOR ONE IN AFFLICTION AND WANT.

" O God ! who art infinite in power, and compassion, and goodness, and truth ! who hast promised in Thy holy Word, that Thou wilt hear the prayer of the poor destitute, and wilt not despise his desire. Look down, I beseech thee, from heaven, the habitation of Thy holiness and glory, upon me a miserable sinner, now lying under Thy hand in great affliction and sorrow. I am weary of my groaning, my heart faileth me. The light of my eyes is gone from me, I sink in the deep waters, and there is none to help me ; yet I wait still upon Thee my God. Though all the world forsake me, let the Lord still uphold me, and in Him let me always find

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 667.

ciples of natural religion, and the firm belief of the being of a God, as well as of His providence, justice, and goodness, (if not, look upon me, and doubt it if you can!) towards which you have had considerable advantages in your reading so much of Tillotson, while you were here, as well as in your mother's most valuable letter to you on that subject, which I hope you will not let mould by you; I am sure you ought not to do it, for not many mothers could write such a letter.

"Now if there be a God, as it follows that He is just, good, and powerful, so I leave it to your own thoughts whether it be not our clearest interest, as well as honour and happiness, to serve Him, and the greatest folly in the world not to do it. This service must begin at the heart by fearing and loving Him. The way to attain this happy temper is often to contemplate, deeply and seriously, His attributes and perfections, especially His omniscience, omnipresence, and justice for the former; and His beneficence and love to mankind to excite the latter, particularly that amazing instance of it—His sending His Son to die for us; which that pious youth, Charles Goodall, (who went to heaven not much older than you are,) could never reflect upon without rapture, as I find by his papers now in my hands, and which, perhaps, you and the public may sometime have a sight of.

"Another way to preserve and increase piety is to exercise it in constant and fervent devotion. There never was a very good man without constant secret prayer; as I know not how any can be wicked while he conscientiously discharges that duty. If we make our less necessary employments take the place of our stated devotions—or, what is next to it, crowd them up into a narrow room—we shall soon find our piety sensibly abate, and all that is good ready to run to ruin.

"With these are to be enjoined the daily reading of God's Word, on no occasion to be omitted, and that with care and observation, especially such passages as more immediately concern your own case and the state of your soul.

"Next to this, I can scarce recommend anything that would more conduce to the advancement of true piety than your Christian diary. I will not reproach you that a mother's commands were more prevalent than those of a father, for your resuming and continuing it, since I am too well pleased that you have at last done it. This, with the exercise which you will have, will find

you employment; and, therefore, you must be a good husband of your time, and fix certain hours for everything, not neglecting bodily exercise for the preservation of your health.

"I have not time to close this head, but yet would not any longer delay to write. I commend you to God's gracious protection, and would have you always remember that He sees and loves you. Your mother will write soon to you. We are all well. —I am your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

' The following is an extract from a letter written seven months after the date of the former one :—

"EPWORTH, August 15, 1706.

"DEAR CHILD,—My last related to that part of piety which is to be exercised between God and your own soul. This will refer to public devotion, which is our due homage to Almighty God, and never ought to be neglected, unless in case of unavoidable necessities, as sickness and the like, and therefore not for taking physic, unless the case be very pressing; for you cannot expect to gain anything in your studies by robbing God of that small moiety of time. I understand you are now under the happy necessity of being always present at public worship, of which I am very glad; but then, you know, it is by no means sufficient to sit as God's people sit, if our hearts be far from Him. There ought to be a due preparation of mind before you presume to approach the house of God. When you are entering, remember whither you are going; when present, remember where you are, and say, 'How dreadful is this place!' Always consider the sacredness of it, on account of its dedication and relation to God, and His presence in it, as well as its sacred uses; for I suppose you are hardly of the same mind with the rebellious assembly of divines, and I hope never will be, who, as impudently as falsely, affirm, that 'no place is holy on account of any separation or dedication whatever.'

"You will find the firm belief of God's presence in His own holy house of prayer will be of great advantage to you in fixing your thoughts on the great work for which you come thither; which, as soon as you enter, and when you take your seat, you are to express in most humble adorations of body and mind.

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 50.

accompanied with some short prayer, either mental or vocal, suitable to the occasion.

“When the service begins, you are to join with it, and go along with every part of it, with the utmost intension and most fervent devotion; for which end keep your eye fixed upon your Prayer-book or Bible, and let your eye go along with the priest, which will keep your thoughts from wandering.

“I hope you understand the cathedral service—I mean, understand what they sing and say—which at first is something difficult. Unless you understand what is said, you might as well pray in an unknown tongue. On the contrary, if we do understand the service and go along with it, we shall find Church music a great help to our devotion, as it notably raises our affections towards heaven; which, I believe, has been the experience of all good men, unless they have been dunces or fanatics; nay, even the latter confess the same of their own sorry Sternhold-psalms, which are infinitely inferior to our cathedral music, as well as some thousands of years of later date, not being of two hundred years standing. We are not to think God has framed man in vain an harmonious creature; and surely music cannot be better employed than in the service and praises of Him who made both the tongue and the ear. I hope you are not so weak as to be moved by the wicked examples of idle lads who regard none of these things, or by their scoffs for your doing it.

“You are to be very attentive to the sermon, because you know in whose name and by whose commission it is delivered; and that faith, and obedience too, come by hearing; this being God’s ordinance for the conversion of mankind and the Church’s edification. By practice you will be able to remember the principal parts of a sermon; which, with a little pains, will add an habitual memory to that good natural one wherewith God hath blessed you. When you come home, immediately retire, either into your closet, or else to some solitary walk in the park. There recollect what you have heard, and fix what is observable in your memory, especially what relates more immediately to yourself and to the state of your own soul. This will be of great advantage to you, on more accounts than one, for it will lay a good foundation of divinity, which study you must always have in your eye, as being both designed for it, and, I hope, inclined to it above any other.

“Have a particular respect to the religion of the Sabbath, as all

good men have ever had. Value highly that time, for as time, in general, is the most precious thing in the world, so this is the most precious of all others, and not designed for idle visits, but for the concern of our souls, and communion with God in prayer and praise, and other acts of piety and devotion.

"I hope you dare not make any exercises upon it but what are proper for the day, such as Judge Hale did; but then, have a care lest, doing this as a school task only, it may not degenerate into formality. Rob not yourself of so much pleasure and profit as you will find in your translations of the Bible into verse, and Sunday exercises of the same nature, if you are but so happy as to reconcile fancy and devotion, which have too long been enemies,

"I shall not write anything to you concerning receiving the blessed sacrament till towards spring; though I hope you frequently think of it and long for it, as the dearest pledge of your Saviour's love, especially when you go home from church and see others stay to receive it.

"And thus much, at present, of public worship.—I am, your affectionate friend and father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

Before proceeding to give further extracts from Mr Wesley's letters, there are two facts in the foregoing which demand attention.

The first is, that the rector was a passionate admirer of sacred music. Of this there can be no doubt. In one of his articles, in the *Athenian Oracle*, (vol. i. p. 393,) he strongly advocates the duty of singing psalms in private families, and attributes the neglect of this to the general decay of piety, though he admits that the faultiness of the metrical versions of the psalms, and the ill choice of tunes, may have had some influence in leading to such neglect. In another article, in the same volume, (p. 440,) he says—"Nothing but a stock is proof against the charms of music, and especially when good sense, good poetry, good tunes, and a good voice meet together." In another article on the same subject, in vol. iii. p. 95, he strongly complains of Sternhold's version, and adds, in reference to the tunes, that most of them are so vile that even Orpheus himself could not make good music out of them. "This, and the reading them at such a lame rate, tearing them limb from limb, and leaving sense, cadency, and all at the mercy

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 53.

of the clerk's nose, may be part of the reason why the Reformed Churches are yet most remiss in psalmody."

Is it too much to say that the marvellous musical genius of his two grandsons, Charles and Samuel Wesley, was inherited from himself? So remarkable was this talent for music that Charles surprised his father, by playing, with correctness, a tune on the harpsichord before he was three years old; while Samuel taught himself to read from Handel's oratorios; had all the airs, recitations, and choruses of "Samson" and the "Messiah," both words and notes, by heart before he was six years old; and, when he was eight, composed and wrote his own oratorio of "Ruth."

The other fact, in the preceding letter, which deserves to be noticed is, that Samuel Wesley recommends his son, as a Sabbath exercise, to make "translations of the Bible into verse." He was as fond of sacred song as he was of sacred music. Besides his poetical "Life of Christ," he had already done what he recommends to his son Samuel, for, in three volumes, he had turned the whole of the histories of the Old and New Testaments into verse; and, though his eldest son did not adopt his suggestion, it was substantially adopted by his youngest son Charles, who, fifty-six years afterwards, published in two volumes his "Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures;" the hymns being two thousand and thirty in number, all founded upon particular texts, beginning with Genesis and ending with the Revelation of St John.

At the risk of being tedious, we cannot deny ourselves the gratification of inserting the substance of two other letters, written by Mr Wesley to his son Samuel, at Westminster School, in the same year as the above were written, 1706:—

"EPWORTH, *September 1706.*

"DEAR CHILD,—The second part of piety regards your duty towards your parents, towards whom I hope you will behave yourself as you ought to the last moment of their lives.

"Some people, who are either fond of paradoxes, or have imbibed ill principles from our modern plays and such like authors, may, for aught I know, be in earnest when they defend that most erroneous and unnatural principle that 'we owe nothing to our parents on account that they are the immediate authors of our being.' But these seem to forget that God himself, the common Father of the universe, urges this as an argument against the in-

gratitude of his people, 'Is he not thy Father?' &c. And again, in Malachi, 'If I be a father, where is my honour?' Perhaps you will think I am pleading my own cause, and so indeed I am, in some measure; but it is the cause of my mother also, and even your own cause, if ever you should have children, and, indeed, that of nature and civil society, which would be dissolved or exceedingly weakened if this great foundation-stone should be removed.

"You know what you owe to one of the best of mothers. Perhaps you may have read of one of the Ptolemies, who chose the name of Philometer, as a more glorious title than if he had assumed that of his predecessor, Alexander. And it would be an honest and virtuous ambition in you to attempt to imitate him, for which you have so much reason. Often reflect on the tender and peculiar love which your dear mother has always expressed towards you; the deep affliction of both body and mind which she underwent for you, both before and after your birth; the particular care she took of your education when she struggled with so many pains and infirmities; and, above all, the wholesome and sweet motherly advice and counsel which she has often given you to fear God, to take care of your soul as well as of your learning, and to shun all vicious and bad examples. You will, I verily believe, remember that these obligations of gratitude, love, and obedience, and the expressions of them are not confined to your tender years, but must last to the very close of life, and, even after that, render her memory most dear and precious to you.

"You will not forget to evidence this by supporting and comforting her in her age, if it please God that she should ever attain to it, (though I doubt she will not,) and doing nothing which may justly displease or grieve her, or show you unworthy of such a mother. You will endeavour to repay her prayers for you by doubling yours for her; and, above all things, to live such a virtuous and religious life that she may find that her care and love have not been lost upon you, but that we may all meet in heaven.

"In short, reverence and love her as much as you will, which I hope will be as much as you can. For though I should be jealous of any other rival in your heart, yet I will not be jealous of her; the more duty you pay her, and the more frequently and kindly you write to her, the more you will please your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 251.

This beautiful advice was not lost. Samuel Badcock, (no great friend of the Wesley family,) in the third volume of the "*Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*," published in 1790, writes:—"I have in my possession a letter of this poor and aged parent, addressed to his son Samuel, in which he gratefully acknowledges his filial duty in terms so affecting that I am at a loss which to admire most—the gratitude of the parent, or the affection and generosity of the child. It was written when the good old man was nearly fourscore, and so weakened by a palsy as to be incapable of directing a pen, unless with his left hand. I preserve it as a curious memorial of what will make Wesley applauded when his wit is forgotten."

The next letter is as characteristic and as full of interest as any of the preceding:—

"EPWORTH, *November 8, 1706.*

"DEAR CHILD,—After piety to God and to your parents, your morals will fall next under consideration; or, your duty towards yourself and your neighbour.

"I hope I need not say much of justice toward your neighbour. Its general rules are short and easy. 'Doing as you would be done by, and loving your neighbour as yourself;' principles which have been admired by wise and virtuous heathens when they have heard them from the gospel; and which are, indeed, inscribed on the hearts of all mankind as a part of the law-natural, though much obliterated by the lapse of our nature and vicious habits.

"As for the regiment of your passions, all the rest depend, in a great measure, on these two—love and hatred, or rather anger.

"As for love, I shall only say at present that whoever expects to become anything in the world must guard against anti-Platonic love in his youth, shut his eyes and heart against it, burn romances, have a care of plays, and keep himself fully employed in some honest exercise; and then, I think, he will be in no very great danger from it.

"But love takes in all desirable objects, or such as we fancy desirable; and here the rule is, first, that it be fixed upon a lawful object; and then, that it exceed not the due measure; since, if we offend against the former part of this rule, it unavoidably renders us criminal; if against the latter, at least ridiculous, imprudent, and unhappy. Indeed, there is but one object of our love where

we cannot transgress in loving too much ; and that is God. Even mediocrity is here a fault, which is both our wisdom and our virtue in all other cases.

"As for hatred, I can scarce tell how it is possible to have it in extremes against any one. For my own part, I have much ado to hate the devil himself. I am sure I have often pitied him ; and I interpret those scriptures which speak of hating the wicked, &c., as relating chiefly to their vices, for which we ought always to have a just abhorrence.

"Anger, and some sort of aversion, I own to be more difficult to subdue, though even these have too often pride or interest at the bottom. There never was a truly great man who could not bridle his passions. This, my boy, is what I wish you would do, what I am sure you may do, and what would render you wiser and greater than most part of mankind. This mastery of yourself will cost you some pains before you can attain it ; but it is richly worth all your labour, since this wise and Christian temper will be so far from inviting injuries, that you will have much fewer offered you in the course of your life ; and if any should be so devilish as to do it, for that very reason, you will find they will glide very gently off, and leave little or no impression behind them.

"And thus much of the government of your passions.—Your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

Such are a few of the godly letters that were written by the Epworth rector immediately after his release from Lincoln Castle. We are loathe to leave so much Christian serenity, fatherly affection, and manly sentiment, for the region of strife and contest ; and yet, to do justice to the subject of these memoirs, we must.

It has been already shown how Samuel Wesley was, unintentionally on his part, involved in the Dissenting controversy. It was most unwarrantable conduct in Mr Clavel to publish a letter which the writer intended to be kept private ; but, being published, and being so savagely attacked by Mr Palmer, there was nothing for it but for Samuel Wesley to defend himself. This he did in his pamphlet, published in 1704. In 1705, Palmer published his "Vindication," in which Wesley was again offensively assailed. Immediately after this, he was subjected to all the disgraceful per-

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 253.

secutions that have been narrated, and, as a climax to the whole, was thrust, by a revengeful spirit, into Lincoln Gaol. He had already begun his "Reply to Mr Palmer's Vindication," and, during his involuntary leisure within his prison-house, he finished it. It consists of 155 pages quarto, and was published "for Robert Clavel, at the Peacock, in St Paul's Churchyard, in 1707." It has on the title-page, for a motto, the following sentence from the writings of Defoe:—"How long must we see the reproaches of our Establishment and the insults of the laws, and be bound to silence, and to say nothing for peace' sake? How long must their false prophets and dreamers of dreams abuse us, and we be obliged to hold our peace?"

The book consists of nine chapters and an introduction.

In the introduction, Wesley states that Palmer has charged him with publishing "scandalous, wicked, malicious, envious, spiteful, injurious, base, bold, daring, rampant, downright, positive, complicated, abominable falsehoods." He says Palmer regales him by applying to him the epithets following:—"Cruel, unjust, wicked, silly, wretched, flagrant, spiteful, impertinent, insidious, scandalous, impudent, barefaced, perfidious, ingrate, sycophant, delator and informer."

Wesley's "Reply" was written at the request of his bishop, who offered to assist him with materials for the work, and revised part of it before it was printed.* It is elaborate and able; but a lengthened review of it, at this period, would be useless. We content ourselves, therefore, with giving a few matters of fact in the order in which the book contains them.

Wesley declares that the Dissenters were now "choosing lads of the most pregnant parts, and were educating them at the public schools of the Church, as St Paul's and others, with the intention to transplant them thence to Dissenting academies, and from thence into a martial phalanx to attack the Church with greater success than their predecessors (p. 7.)

In the 15th page, Wesley strangely enough "thanks God that the Act of Uniformity is not repealed, and that all the strength of the Dissenters cannot prevail to repeal it!" Remembering what his father and his grandfather were made to suffer by that Act, one cannot help but think that there is hardly good taste in this.

* Wesley's Reply, p. 154.

Wesley says he can give the name of a famed Dissenting minister who was active in taking away all our legal securities, and caballed with those who were favourites at Court. He and his proselytes met at a house not far from the Poultry Church, whither many of the Dissenting ministers usually resorted. When Wesley had just returned to London from the university, those caballers used all the arguments they could think of to persuade him to join them; but he writes:—"I thank God I abhorred their proposals, and never saw them more, unless I accidentally met them," (pp. 62 and 63.)

Palmer, in his "Vindication," had alleged that Benjamin Bridgewater, the Calves-head poet, learned to sing "To Puss, Boys" in Trinity College, Cambridge, thereby intending to cast a slur upon the reputation of the Church. Wesley replies:—"I am sorry they won't suffer poor Ben (my successor in the favours of the party) to be quiet in his grave." He then proceeds to show that poor Ben, for bad behaviour, was forced to leave Cambridge University some years before the song "To Puss, Boys" was published, and that when he came to London he took sanctuary among Dissenters, and wrote the anthems of the Calves-head Club, by which he became the darling of the party, and was entertained and caressed at their houses," (p. 65.)

- Wesley declares that up to the time that his "letter" was published by Clavel, and he published his "Defence," his best friends were all Dissenters, but that now he had lost their favour, because he could not comply with their proposals to retract the truths that he had written concerning Dissenting matters. He writes:—"You cannot say but that my behaviour towards you has been inoffensive during the many years which have elapsed since I left you. I have received common civilities from some of your persuasion, and have, in my turn, obliged them as occasion offered. I never desired your destruction, but your reformation. I showed no great fondness to engage against you. It was a mere accident that occasioned it, and I sent you fair warning long before I began to write my defence. I am of no party that I know of, unless you reckon those to be such who desire you should neither distress nor overtop the Establishment," (p. 73.)

Wesley says Palmer accuses him of bowing and cringing to the Dissenters since he had joined the Church. He replies:—"I own this to be true, for I have often asked my father-in-law's, and my

mother's blessing, and I did once bow down in the house of Rimmon ; but for the rest nobody ever accused me that my knees were *suppled*," (p. 99.)

Wesley relates a story to the effect that on January 31st, 1698, which happened to be Sunday, a clergyman near London was preaching a sermon, from 1 Peter, ii. 13, in reference to the martyrdom of King Charles, and that nine pupils from a neighbouring Dissenting Academy came to hear him. After the service, a deputation of two of them waited upon him and invited him to a noble entertainment to be given the same evening. The clergyman refused. They then began to quarrel with his sermon, and said Charles I. was "a cursed tyrant, and that his death was the just execution of a damned malefactor." The next day, the same clergyman received a letter signed Timothy Greybeard, stating, that, if he had gone as invited to the supper on the night previous, they would have given him, as "the principal dish, the best calf's-head they could have procured for love or money ; and that, if he had been inclined to drink a health to the sanctified head, there would have been good humming liquor to have washed his conscience in a few gulps," (p. 100.)

Wesley acknowledges that, when he was a pupil in the Dissenting Academy, three arch lasses made a fool of him by clothing him in a cloak, and sending him through St Paul's Churchyard to ask for Rochester's "Divine Poems ;" but he indignantly denies that he ever kept any lewd company, though he says it was "one of the happiest providences of his life that he did not, and that he had a narrow escape from debauchery and ruin." He adds, "Though I kept no such company, I know too many Dissenters that did, and know where they have made assignations with them, in your very meetings, though it is possible that, in twenty years, those ladies may be advanced to a more venerable character than they then possessed," (pp. 139 and 140.) He further states that the majority of the Dissenters, with whom he had been acquainted, preferred a commonwealth to a monarchy, abhorred the memory of Charles I., and the name and race of the Stuarts ; and that they could not deny that lewdness and debauchery were not uncommon in their academies as well as in other places, (p. 143.)

In closing the controversy, Mr Wesley says, that when he was last in London, in January and February 1705, he was often ruffled by being urged to retract, or at least palliate his charges

against the Dissenters; and that, as he was about to receive the sacrament, he wrote the following protestation, and sent it to the clergyman who was to officiate:—

“I take this opportunity solemnly to declare, that what I have written in relation to the Dissenters, in my letter, and the defence of it, is strictly true, and that I have not wilfully charged them with anything that is otherwise.”

“He adds, “After the delivery of this, I bless God I *received* with as great quiet and satisfaction as I hope I should die with, if God should call me to witness to the truth with my last breath.”

“If in the heat of controversy I have unadvisedly used any expressions in this or in any other of my writings, that either may reflect too severely on a whole body of men, among whom I doubt not there are many who fear God and have a zeal for Him, though I think it is not according to knowledge, or which have not been agreeable to the spirit of Christianity and the example of my great Master, I do heartily, very heartily, ask pardon both of God and them, as I desire the same for my greatest enemies; and having written this, and again and again reviewed and weighed it, I am not much concerned for the consequence of it as to this world, but shall conclude as our Church does one part of our Litany, ‘In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment—good Lord, deliver us.’”

We now subjoin two letters written by Mr Wesley in the year in which his last controversial work was published. Both were addressed to his son Samuel, now King’s Scholar, in Westminster School:—

“EPWORTH, October 2, 1707.

“DEAR SAM,—Read the histories of Joseph, of Daniel, and of Lot; and, if you please, the thirteenth satire of Juvenal.

“Remember, God sees, and will punish and reward.

“If you can get no other time to say your prayers, you may do it as you seem to be reading, for done it must be, or you know what follows! But have not you time when you sit up to watch?

"That God may evermore preserve you, is the prayer of your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY." *

"EPWORTH, Dec. 29, 1707.

"DEAR CHILD,—I was pleased to see in your last that you expressed an inclination to repose a more than ordinary confidence in me. I have endeavoured to show that I really value your affection, and I should be very well satisfied if you looked upon me as your friend, as well as your father. Sammy, believe it, there are but few in the world that are fit to be trusted with our weaknesses and most private thoughts; and yet it is exceedingly convenient to have some one to whom one might safely communicate them, especially in youth, when first launching into the world. I know there are not many who would choose a father for this; but since you are inclined to do it, perhaps it shall not be the worse for you, and I will promise you so much secrecy, that even your mother shall know nothing but what you have a mind she should, for which reason it may be convenient you should write to me still in Latin.

"It is agreed by all that a pure body and a chaste mind are an acceptable sacrifice to infinite Purity and Holiness; and that, without these, a thousand hecatombs would never be accepted. How happy are those who preserve their first purity and innocence; and how much easier is it to abstain from the first acts, than not to reiterate them and sink into inveterate habits! There is no parleying with the temptation to this sin, which is nourished by sloth and intemperance. You have not wanted repeated warnings, and I hope they have not been altogether in vain. The shortness, the baseness, the nastiness of the pleasure would be enough to make one nauseate it did not the devil and the flesh unite in their temptations to it. However, conquered it must be, for we must part with that or heaven! Ah, my boy, what sneaking things does vice make us! What traitors to ourselves, and how false within! And what invincible courage, as well as calmness, attends virtue and innocence!

"Now, my boy, (it is likely,) begins that conflict whereof I have so often warned you, and which will find you warm work for some years. Now vice or virtue, God or Satan, heaven or hell, which

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 575.

will you choose? What, if you should fall on your knees this moment, or as soon as you can retire, and choose the better part? If you have begun to do amiss, resolve to do better. Give up yourself solemnly to God and to His service. Implore the mercy and gracious aid of your Redeemer, and the blessed assistance (perhaps the return) of the Holy Comforter. You will not be cast off. You will not want strength from above, which will be infinitely beyond your own, or even the power of the enemy. The holy angels are spectators, and will rejoice at your conquest. Why should you not make your parents' heart rejoice. You know how tenderly they are concerned for you, and how fain they would have you virtuous and happy.

"I cannot close my letter without adding something remarkable that has lately happened in our town (though it is not over-fruitful in adventures) which may afford you some useful remarks.

"Your worthy schoolmaster, John Holland, whose kindness you wear on your knuckles, after having cost his father, Thomas Holland, two or three hundred pounds at the University, in hopes he would live to help his sister and brothers, and for want of which the poor old man now lies in Lincoln Gaol, without any hopes of liberty unless death should set him free; after having been in thirteen places, and pawned his gown and clothes almost as often, being thrown out wherever he came for his wickedness and lewdness—was making homewards about a month or six weeks since, and got within ten or a dozen miles of Epworth, where he fell sick, out of rage or despair, and was brought home to the parish in a cart, and has lain almost mad since he came hither. Peter Forster, the Anabaptist preacher, gave him twopence to buy some brandy, and thought he was very generous. His mother fell a-cursing God when she saw him. She has been with me to beg the assistance of the parish for him. What think you of this example?—I am, your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

The above letter is a beautiful example of the loving confidence which ought to exist between a father and his children. It also affords incidental evidence, which refutes the commonly-received opinion, that the early education of the Wesley children was devolved exclusively on the mother. There can be no doubt that

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 576.

Samuel Wesley educated her children up to a certain point, but was obliged to stop and some of the daughters the elements of French and Latin. From the foregoing account it is undeniable that Samuel Wesley was a thorough master of the English language, and had a respectable knowledge of the French, she was not so familiar with Latin as to be able to read it without difficulty. Still it is there can be little question that, whatever knowledge the sons and daughters had of the languages, had of the French, was communicated by their father; for, though Samuel seems to have had a bad Italian tutor for a time, there is no evidence that any other of the children had a like provision. In the first place the mother could not afford it; and, secondly, there was no need of it for he himself was one of the best natural scholars in his age.

Wesley had now eight children, and two more were intrusted to him afterwards. We have already sketched all that were born up to the year 1707. In 1701 the mother's wife had twins, both of whom died in infancy. In 1702 occurred the birth of their daughter Anne. At the age of about twenty-three she married Mr John Lambert, a land-surveyor at Epsworth. Lambert was an educated man, and was particularly careful to collect the early pamphlet publications of his father-in-law, Mr Samuel Wesley, from which collection, and from Lambert's manuscript notes, Dr Adam Clarke derived considerable assistance in his compilation of the *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*. Mr and Mrs Lambert, in 1737, were residing at Hamhill where they were visited by Charles Wesley. Lambert was betrayed into drinking habits by his brother-in-law, the wretched Wright; but Charles Wesley laboured to reclaim him, and it is hoped with good effect.

In the eventful year 1703, when Mr Wesley's unfortunate letter was published by Mr Clavel, his son John was born; but of him we need say nothing.

In 1705, the year that Mr Wesley was imprisoned, another child was born: and, as already stated, was smothered by its nurse, and thrown dead into its mother's arms.

In 1707, the year in which Wesley wrote the preceding letters to his son Samuel, his daughter Martha was given him. Martha was reputed, by her sisters, to be the mother's favourite; and certainly Martha loved and almost idolised her mother. From her infancy she was remarkable for deep thoughtfulness, for equani-

mity of temper, and for serious deportment. Her brothers and sisters would use all kinds of witty mischief to ruffle her; but in vain. The likeness between herself and her brother John was so exact, that Dr Clarke declares, if he had seen them dressed in the same attire, he could not have distinguished the one from the other. Their disposition also was the same; and even their handwriting was so much alike that the one might be easily mistaken for the other. At the age of thirteen, she went to live with her uncle Matthew in London, and remained with him for the space of a dozen years.* Here she became acquainted with Westley Hall, who was one of the pupils of her brother John, at Lincoln College. Hall, at that time, was a man of agreeable person, pleasing manners, and good property. He fell in love with Martha, and made her an offer of marriage. Without consulting any of her family she accepted him. Within a week he went with her brothers John and Charles to Epworth, where he grew enamoured of her younger sister Kezziah, made an engagement to marry her, and was on the point of leading her to the altar, when a sudden qualm of conscience reminded him of his previous engagement, and he came back to Martha. They were married in 1735, (the year in which her father died;) and her uncle Matthew gave her a dowry of £500. Hall, for a time, behaved like a gentleman and a Christian, and honourably fulfilled his duties as a curate of the Church of England at Salisbury. He then became a Moravian and Quietist, an Antinomian, a Deist, if not an Atheist, and a Polygamist, which last he defended in his teaching, and illustrated by his practice. While a curate at Salisbury, he seduced one of his servants, and was afterwards guilty of many similar infidelities. Once when Charles Wesley was preaching at Bristol, and had his sister Patty for a hearer, Hall came into the room and took her off with him. On another occasion at Salisbury, he turned both her and her brother John out of doors. Samuel Wesley, jun., never liked him. In a letter to John he says—"I never liked the man from the first time I saw him. His smoothness never suited my roughness. He appeared always to dread me as a wit. This, with me, is a sure sign of guilt and hypocrisy. He was afraid I

* This is taken from Clarke's *Wesley Family*, but it is not correct; for, in her twenty-fourth year, she was at Epworth, where she was courted by her father's curate, John Romley; and, at Christmas, 1723, when the Romley courtship was broken off, her father removed her to a situation in the family of Mr Grantham, of Kelstern.—See original letter in *Wesleyan Times*, Jan. 29, 1866.

should see it, if I looked keenly into his eye."* After being the father of ten children by his wife, nine of whom lie buried at Salisbury, Hall abandoned his family, went off to the West Indies with one of his mistresses, lived with her there till she died, and afterwards returned to England, where, professing penitential sorrow, he was cordially received by his injured and incomparable wife, who showed him every Christian attention till his death, which took place at Bristol, Jan. 6, 1776. John Wesley buried him, and says—"God had given him deep repentance."

Such was poor Patty's worthless and vagabond husband; and yet, in the midst of all her trials, she acted the part of a perfect Christian. Out of sheer pity, she actually gave money to one of her husband's abandoned concubines; and, on another occasion, when he, with frontless inhumanity, brought home one of his illegitimate infants, and commanded his wife to take charge of it till he could make other provision for it, she ordered a cradle to be brought, placed the babe in it, and continued to perform for it all the requisite acts of humanity.

Mrs Hall often dined with Dr Johnson at Bolt Court; he ardently admired her, and always treated her with great reverence and respect. In many cases, her conversation supplied to Johnson the place of books; for her memory was a repository of the most striking events of past centuries; and she had the best parts of all the English poets by heart. Of wit she used to say, she was the only one of the family without it; and her brother Charles remarked that "Sister Patty was always too wise to be witty." One of her peculiarities was, she could never be induced to behold a corpse, "Because," said she, "it is beholding sin sitting upon his throne." Mrs Hall died on the 12th of July 1791, her last words being, "I have the assurance which I have long prayed for. Shout!" She was the last survivor of the original Wesley family; her father, mother, brothers, and sisters having all died before her. In all respects, she was a remarkable woman; but, in Christian charity, was pre-eminent. Her brother Charles was accustomed to say, "It is in vain to give Pat anything to add to her comforts, for she always gives it away to some person poorer than herself." In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1791, p. 684, there is the following obituary notice:—"July 12, in the City Road, in her eighty-fourth year, Mrs Martha Hall, widow of the Rev.

* *Westminster Magazine*, 1774.

Mr H., and last surviving sister of the Rev. John and Charles Wesley. She was equally distinguished by piety, understanding, and sweetness of temper. Her sympathy for the wretched, and her bounty even to the worthless, will eternise her name in better worlds than this.*

In the year 1708, Charles Wesley was born, and two years afterwards Kezziah, the youngest of the rector's children that survived the days of infancy.

Throughout life Kezziah Wesley's health was delicate, in consequence of which she was prevented from improving a mind that seems to have been capable of high cultivation. When she was about nineteen years of age, she became a teacher in a boarding-school in Lincoln, where she complains of the want of clothes and of money, but wishes to remain for the purpose of completing her education. She had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, both divine and human; but her bad health rendered her almost incapable of close mental application. We refrain from again advertising to the distressing acquaintance with Westley Hall; suffice it to say, that after this she for a time was boarded at the house of the venerable Vicar of Bexley, the Rev. Mr Piers. She afterwards was domiciled with an aunt at Islington, and her brother Samuel offered her a home at Tiverton. It was not long that she needed the kindness of her friends, for, at the age of thirty-one, she peacefully expired. Her brother Charles gives the following account of her death:—"Yesterday morning, March 9, 1741, sister Kezzy died in the Lord Jesus. He finished His work, and cut it short in mercy; full of thankfulness, resignation, and love, without pain or trouble, she commended her spirit into the hands of Jesus, and fell asleep."†

Such were the members of the Wesley family. "Such a family," writes Dr Clarke, "I have never read of, heard of, or known; nor since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."

Charles Wesley tells us that he has heard his father say, "God had shown him he should have all his nineteen children about him in heaven;"‡ and there is little doubt that, for more than seventy years past, this hope of the rector has been realised.

* See also the *Journals of J. and C. Wesley*; also, Clarke's *Wesley Family*

† Whitehead's *Life of J. and C. Wesley*, vol. i. p. 75.

‡ *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 272.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRE AND FURY—1709-1712.

ON two previous occasions Samuel Wesley had been a heavy sufferer by fire. In 1702, two-thirds of his parsonage was burnt ; and, in 1704, all his flax shared the same disastrous fate. Five years after this, another, and even more serious, fire occurred. On February 9, 1709, at midnight, when all the family were in bed, Hetty, who was now twelve years old, was awoke by sparks of fire falling from the roof upon her feet. On account of severe illness from which his wife was suffering, Samuel Wesley was sleeping in a separate room. Hetty ran to alarm him, and, at the same moment, he was startled by a cry of fire out of doors. He hurried to Mrs Wesley, and bid her and her eldest daughters rise as quickly as possible. He then burst open the nursery door, where in two beds were sleeping five of his children and their nurse. The nurse seized Charles, the youngest, and bid the others follow. Three of the elder children did as they were bidden ; but John was left sleeping. All the family excepting him, a child seven years of age, were in the hall surrounded with flames and unable to escape, the key of the door being above stairs. Mr Wesley ran up and recovered the key a minute before the stair steps took fire. The door was now opened, but the wind drove the flames inwards with such violence that egress seemed impossible. Some of the children now escaped through the windows, and the rest through a little door into the garden. Mrs Wesley was not in a condition either to climb to the windows or get to the garden door ; and, naked as she was, she was compelled to force her way to the main entrance through the fury of the flames, which she did, suffering no further harm than the scorching of her legs, hands, and face.

When Mr Wesley was counting heads to see if all his family

were safe, he heard a cry issuing from the nursery, and found that John was wanting. He attempted to ascend the stairs, but they were all on fire, and were insufficient to bear his weight. Finding it impossible to render help, he knelt down in the blazing hall and commended the soul of his child to God. Meanwhile the child had mounted a chest which stood near the window, and one in the yard saw him, and proposed running to fetch a ladder for his escape. Another seeing there was not time for that, proposed that he would fix himself against the wall, and that a lighter man should be set upon his shoulders. This was done—the child was pulled through the window; and, at the same instant, the roof fell with a fearful crash, but fortunately fell inwards, and thus the two men and the rescued child were saved from perishing. When the child was taken to an adjoining house where his father was, the devout rector cried, "Come, neighbours, let us kneel down; let us give thanks to God; He has given me all my eight children; let the house go; I am rich enough."

The next day, as he was walking in his garden, and mournfully surveying the ruins of his house, he descried part of a leaf of his Polyglott Bible, on which the only words legible were: "*Vade, vende omnia quae habes, et attolle crucem, et sequere me.*" "Go, sell all that thou hast; and take up thy cross, and follow me."

The house, the furniture, and the rector's library were burnt; but perhaps the severest loss, at least to posterity, was the destruction of manuscripts. This included Mr Wesley's long-continued literary correspondence, the writings of his wife, and many important papers relative to the Annesley family, and particularly to Dr Annesley himself;—papers which the doctor had intrusted to Mrs Wesley as his best beloved child. Besides these, all the sermons of the rector were consumed, and likewise a large and important manuscript on Hebrew poetry, in which he had turned the book of Psalms, and all the Hebrew hymns in the Pentateuch, and in the book of Judges, into verse.

A few small mementoes of this terrible calamity were preserved, and among others a hymn, written by Samuel Wesley, with music adapted, probably by Henry Purcell or Dr Blow. This hymn is the only one, by the rector of Epworth, that finds a place in the Methodist Hymn-Book, and there even it is curtailed. We present it to the reader complete.

"Behold the Saviour of mankind
Nail'd to the shameful tree !
How vast the love that Him inclined
To bleed and die for thee !

"Though far unequal our low praise
To Thy vast sufferings prove,
O Lamb of God, thus all our days
Thus will we grieve and love.

"Hark, how He groans ! while nature shakes,
And earth's strong pillars bend ;
The temple's veil in sunder breaks ;
The solid marbles rend.

" 'Tis done ! the precious ransom's paid ;
"Receive My soul," He cries :
See where He bows His sacred head !
He bows His head and dies !

"But soon he'll break death's envious chain,
And in full glory shine :
O Lamb of God ! was ever pain,
Was ever love like Thine !

"Thy loss our ruins did repair,
Death, by Thy death, is slain ;
Thou wilt at length exalt us where
Thou dost in glory reign."

Samuel Wesley himself wrote an account of this dire disaster to his old patron, the Duke of Buckingham ; and that account contains some particulars not included in the preceding statement, taken from the description furnished by his wife. He says, that on the day when the fire occurred they had been brewing, but had finished the operation at least six hours before the flames broke out. He was in his study till half-past ten o'clock, but neither saw nor smelled anything of fire. The reason why he slept in a room separate from his wife was because she was near her confinement. Her daughters, Emilia and Susannah, were sleeping with her. When he was aroused by the cry of fire, he ran to her room with his nightgown and one stocking on, and his breeches in his hand. They had about £20, in gold and silver, in the room occupied by Mrs Wesley, which she wanted to take with her ; but there was no time for this, and she had to escape for her life as she left her bed. The whole family had to flee in nothing but their night-dresses. While the nurse was escaping with the infant child, Charles, in her arms, she was saluted with a curse by one

of the neighbours, and told that they had fired the house themselves, the second time, on purpose. While Wesley was running about the street, inquiring for his wife and children, he met the chief man and chief constable of the town going from the house, not towards it. Wesley took him by the hand and said, "God's will be done!" His surly answer was, "Will you never have done with your tricks? You fired your house once before. Did you not get money enough by it then that you have done it again?" Wesley replied, "God forgive you! I find you are chief, Maw, still." When he found his wife she was almost speechless. She had waded, at the peril of her life, through two or three yards of flame, having nothing on but her shoes and a wrapping gown, and a loose coat, which she held about her breast. He adds, "When poor Jackey was saved, I could not believe it till I had kissed him two or three times. My wife said, 'Are your books safe?' I told her it was not much, now she and all the rest were preserved alive. A little lumber was saved below stairs; but not one rag or leaf above. We found some of the silver in a lump, which I shall send up to Mr Hoare to sell for me. Mr Smith, of Gainsborough, and others, have sent for some of my children. I want nothing, having above half my barley safe in my barns unthrashed. I had finished my alterations in the 'Life of Christ' a little while since, and transcribed three copies of it; but all is lost. God be praised! I know not how to write to my poor boy Samuel; and yet I must, or else he will think we are all lost. I hope my wife will recover and not miscarry, but God will give me my nineteenth child. She has burnt her legs; but they mend. When I came to her her lips were black. I did not know her. Some of the children are a little burnt, but not hurt or disfigured. I only got a small blister on my hand. The neighbours send us clothes, for it is cold without them."•

How are we to account for these repeated fires at the Epworth parsonage? Were they the effect of design or of accident? Mr Maw, the chief man of the town, who more than thirty years afterwards seems to have been a friend to John Wesley, and to one of his itinerants, (*see Wesley's Works*, vol. i. pp. 438 and 485; also, vol. ii. p. 45,) most cruelly charged Mr Wesley with setting fire to the house himself. A more atrocious accusation could not

• *C. Wesley's Life*, vol. ii. p. 493.

have been cast upon him. What reason on earth was there to induce such a man to commit such an act? It is true, he might expect money to be given to rebuild his house; but was that sufficient to induce a man of Wesley's high character to destroy not only all his furniture, but his books, sermons, and manuscripts; to run the risk of killing himself, his wife, and his eight children; and, at the least, to leave the whole of them, in the depth of winter, without a shred of clothing, and without a hut to shelter them; the whole family, to use the rector's own language, being reduced, in regard to house, furniture, and clothes, to the same state as that in which "Adam and Eve were when they first set up housekeeping?" To suppose the very possibility of such a thing is a most monstrous outrage against reason and common sense; and when such an accusation was made by "the chief man of the town," and by the foul-mouthed blasphemer that cursed the nursemaid and little Charles, one cannot help suspecting that this was done, not because they thought the rector guilty, but in order to hide the guilt of the execrable villains whom they knew or suspected to be the actual perpetrators of the deed.

If Wesley, then, was not himself the incendiary, was the fire an accident? This also is unlikely. The fire did not occur in summer, when a spark might ignite the thatch, but in winter, when the thatch was saturated with rain, and snow. It occurred not in the day time, but at the hour of midnight, when all the fires of the house were extinguished. It broke out not in the lower part of the house, but in the roof of the corn-chamber,* filled with wheat and other grain,† and therefore must have been lighted from without. Wesley supposes the possibility of the chimney having taken fire; but, as a set-off against such a supposition, he adds that the chimney had recently been swept, and that when he went to bed, about half an hour before the flames were seen, he neither saw nor smelled anything of fire. Put all these facts together, and the conclusion is almost inevitable that the house was not fired either by Wesley himself, or by accident. If, then, the house was not fired by the rector himself, nor yet by accident, how did the disaster happen? John Wesley, and probably his father, held the opinion that the house was designedly set on fire by some of Mr Wesley's enemies. What evidence is there in favour of this opinion?

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1846, p. 1087.

† *C Wesley's Life*, vol. ii., p. 493.

First of all, there is the fact that, during the last six years, Mr Wesley had taken a prominent part in the great controversy of the period,—the exceedingly bitter controversy between the Dissenters and the High-Church party of the Church of England. This had made him many enemies.

Secondly, he had, four years before, in the severely contested county election, incurred great opprobrium, and not a little danger, by voting for the Tory and High-Church candidates.

Thirdly, he had to deal with dishonest parishioners, and did not always treat them with the utmost discretion. Take a case in point. Many of the parishioners gave him trouble about his tithes, and, at one time, would only pay in kind. Going into a field where the tithe corn was already separated from the rest, Mr Wesley found the farmer very deliberately cutting off the ears of corn from Wesley's tithe sheaves, and putting them into a bag. Wesley walked up to him, but, instead of accusing him of his shabby theft, took him by the arm, and walked with him into Epworth. Reaching the market-place, the rector suddenly seized the farmer's bag, and turning it inside out before all the people, told them of the petty pilfering of which the farmer had been guilty. He then left him, with his scattered spoils, to the judgment of his neighbours, and, with the utmost composure, went home to his wife and family. The beggarly thief richly deserved such a withering exposure; but such treatment was likely to turn such delinquents into most insatiable enemies.*

Fourthly, added to all this, it must be borne in mind that, at this period, the people in the neighbourhood of Epworth, and living in the Isle of Axholme, were little better than Christian savages, and that it was no unusual thing for them to vent their hatred by burning the crops and the farm-steads of those whom they regarded as their enemies. A few years before the burning of the parsonage, a Mr Reading, with commendable spirit, had enclosed about a thousand acres of Epworth manor with a good substantial fence, and had ploughed it, and used other means to make it productive; and, for this enterprising act and for other reasons, the half-brutal inhabitants assaulted him and his servants wherever they had a chance, and even fired guns at them. They destroyed all Mr Reading's out-buildings and his tenants' houses; they chipped his fruit-trees, burnt his fences, and turned his cattle into his

* Moore's *Life of J. Wesley*, vol. i. p. 112.

standing corn ; and finally they fired his house, with the intention of burning him, his wife, and his children in their beds. This lawless mob was headed by a furious, termagant woman, called Popplewell ; and she and some others of her companions were indicted at Lincoln assizes, in 1694, and were convicted, but, strangely enough, were allowed to escape punishment by the payment of a paltry fine.

Mr Reading, after this, rebuilt his burnt house at a short distance from the site of the former one ; but no sooner was it finished than it was set on fire during the night, the key-holes of the doors being filled with clay to prevent the family making their escape. This was in April 1697 ; and two months afterwards, as though it was not enough to burn a man's house twice over, the rioters proceeded to pull down his farm buildings, broke his lead pump in pieces, cut down his orchard, and burnt all his implements of husbandry.* One reason assigned for all this lawless outrage was that Mr Reading had been appointed to collect the rents of the sixty thousand acres of swamps in the Isle of Axholme, which, at an expense of £56,000, had been drained during the reign of Charles I., and on which recovered lands about two hundred Dutch families and a number of French Protestants had settled. For more than fifty years tumults were continual ; and, in 1702, Mr Reading drew up a memorial, in which he mentions his " having provided horses, arms, and necessaries, with twenty hired men, and often more," to maintain the peace ; and, that " after thirty-one set battles," he had reduced the riotous inhabitants to obedience. Proceedings in Chancery were instituted, but these unhappy disputes, respecting the proprietaryship of the soil, were not finally adjusted till 1719.†

It was among such half-civilised savages that Samuel Wesley lived and laboured. No wonder that, as in the case of his neighbour Mr Reading, his house and premises should be set on fire once and again within the space of seven short years. At that period this was the way in which the men of the Isle of Axholme displayed and gratified their malignant and revengeful feeling.

The second burning of Mr Wesley's parsonage was a terrible calamity. Apart from the loss of his furniture, books, and manuscripts, it was a serious trial for himself, his pregnant wife, and

* Stonehouse's *History of Axholme*.

† *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 148.

his seven children, to be left without a home, and almost without a rag to hide their nakedness. The children were divided among their neighbours, relatives, and friends, Matthew Wesley, the surgeon, taking two, Susannah and Mehetabel. The rector and his wife, of course, had to remain at Epworth, and provide for themselves in the best way they could. The house was rebuilt within a year after it was burnt; but the rector was so impoverished that thirteen years afterwards his wife declares that the house was still not half furnished, and that to that very day she and her children had not more than half enough of clothing.* No wonder; for, in the self-same letter, Mrs Wesley expressly states that, after deducting "taxes, poor assessments, sub-rents, tenths, procurations, and synodals," the Epworth living brought them not more than about £130 a year. Out of that amount the rector had to re-furnish his house, re-stock his library, find food and clothing for a family of ten or twelve, and provide the best education for his children that he could.

The new parsonage was a great improvement upon the old thatched building that was burnt. It is thus described by Dr Adam Clarke, who visited it one hundred and eleven years after it was built:—"It is a large, plain mansion, built of brick, with a canted roofed and tiled; a complete old-fashioned family house, and very well suited for nineteen children. The attic floor is entirely from end to end of the whole building; the floor terraced, and evidently designed for a repository of the tithe corn, and where it would be kept cool and safe. In the churchyard there is a sycamore tree, which was planted by the hand of old Samuel Wesley, and which is exactly two fathoms in circumference. It is become hollow at the root, and is decaying fast. It is well grown, and has shot out strong and powerful boughs, but some have already dropt off, and, after a few more years, it will have neither root nor branch."

This was in 1821. Dr A. Clarke represents the people of Epworth, at that time, as having "but little polish, but no boorishness in their manners." They appeared to be good-natured, simple, sincere, humble, and singularly modest, and retained "the manners of the better part of the peasants of two hundred years ago," so that, of course, in the doctor's estimation, they were still, notwithstanding all their improvements, two hundred years behind

* Moore's *Life of J. Wesley*, vol. i. p. 565.

their age. The doctor, however, was highly gratified with his visit; brought away with him a pair of fire-tongs which had once been the property of Samuel Wesley; and mentions a fact unparalleled in his travellings, viz., that, on leaving Epworth, he "had no road for upwards of forty miles, but travelled through fields of corn, wheat, rye, potatoes, barley, and turnips, often crushing them under the carriage wheels." Even as late as 1821, there seems to have been no better road to Epworth than this.*

In the same year that the Epworth parsonage was burnt, great excitement was created in the nation by two turbulent sermons preached by Dr Henry Sacheverell, one at Derby, the other at St Paul's.

Henry Sacheverell was ten years younger than Samuel Wesley. He obtained the rudiments of education from a village school-master, at the cost of an apothecary, on whose death, his widow sent the youth to Magdalene College, Oxford. Here he distinguished himself by some clever poems in Latin; was chosen fellow of his college, and became tutor to several pupils who afterwards attained great eminence. His first preferment in the Church was to the living of Cannock, in Staffordshire; whence he removed, in 1705, to St Saviour's, Southwark. Four years after his removal hither, he preached the sermons already mentioned. The sermon at Derby, was preached at the assizes, August 15, 1709, and is entitled, "The Communication of Sin, a Sermon, by Henry Sacheverell, D.D.; published at the request of the gentlemen of the grand jury, London, 1709." The text is, "Neither be partakers of other men's sins." One extract from the sermon must suffice. Speaking of men propagating sin by pernicious writings, he says:—

"How do these execrable miscreants, Arius and Socinus, though so many years rotten in their graves, still stink above ground, and live again in a hellish transmigration of their damnable blasphemies and heresies! How do those Atheistical monsters, Hobbes and Spinoza, in their accursed books and proselytes, still deny the God that made them! What a magazine of sin, what an inexhaustible fund of debauchery and destruction does any author of heresy, schism, or immorality, set up! Who would have thought, threescore years ago, that the romantic and silly enthusiasms of such an illiterate and scandalous wretch as George Fox should, in the small compass even of our own memory, gain such

Life of Dr Clarke, by a member of his family, vol. ii. p. 402.

mighty ground, captivate so many fools, and damn them with diabolical inspiration and nonsensical cant? Or, to go higher, who would have thought that two or three Jesuits, in masquerade, crept into a conventicle, should sow those schismatical seeds of faction and rebellion, that, in a few years, should rise to that prodigious degree, as to be able to grasp the crown, contend with the sceptre and not only threaten, but accomplish the downfall of both Church and State? And are not the same hands at work again? Were ever such outrageous blasphemies against God and all religion vented publicly with impunity as at present in our own Church and kingdom?"

The sermon at St Paul's was preached on the 5th of November 1709, and is entitled, "The Perils of False Brethren, both in Church and State." It is dedicated "To the Right Honourable Sir Samuel Garrard, Lord Mayor of the City of London." The sermon is long, able, and eloquent; but, at the same time, rabid and almost frantic. The following are specimens:—

Speaking of the Church of England, he says: "Her holy communion has been rent and divided by factions and schismatical impostors; her pure doctrine has been corrupted and defiled; her primitive worship and discipline profaned and abused; her sacred orders denied and vilified; her priests and professors calumniated, misrepresented, and ridiculed; her altars and sacraments prostituted to hypocrites, Deists, Socinians, and Athiests; and all this done, not only by our professed enemies, but, which is worse, by our pretended friends and false brethren."

Having laid down the doctrine of "absolute and unconditional obedience to kings in all things lawful," he proceeds to say: "This fundamental doctrine, notwithstanding its divine sanction, is now, it seems, quite exploded and ridiculed out of countenance, as an unfashionable, superannuated, nay, as a dangerous tenet, utterly inconsistent with the right, liberty, and property of the people, who have the power invested in them to cancel their allegiance at pleasure, and to call their sovereign to account for high-treason against his supreme subjects; yea, to dethrone and murder him for a criminal, as they did the royal martyr, by a judiciary sentence. God be thanked, these damnable positions, let them come from Rome or from Geneva, from the pulpit or the press, are condemned for rebellion and high-treason. Where is the difference betwixt the power granted the people to judge and dethrone

their sovereigns for any cause they think fit, and the no less usurped power of the Pope to solve the people from their allegiance, and to dispose of sceptres and diadems whenever he thinks it his interest to pluck them from his enemies? If such a deposing power is to be intrusted into the hands of mortals, less inconvenience will ensue in placing it in one than in many. Our crown and constitution can never be safe under such precarious dependencies and despotic imaginations. A prince will be the breath of his subjects' nostrils, to be blown in or out at their caprice and pleasure, and a worse vassal than the meanest of his guards. Such villainous and seditious principles as these, demand a confutation from that government they so insolently threaten and arraign, and are only proper to be answered by that sword they would make our princes bear in vain, by the so long-called-for censure of an ecclesiastical synod, and the correction of a provoked and affronted legislature, to whose strict justice and undeserved mercy I commit both them and their authors."

Again, speaking of the Dissenters, he designates them "filthy dreamers, presumptuous and self-willed men, despisers of dominion, who are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, and who wrest the Word of God to their own destruction." He adds: "These false brethren in our government are suffered to combine into bodies and seminaries, where Atheism, Deism, Tritheism, Socinianism, with all the hellish principles of fanaticism, regicide, and anarchy, are openly professed and taught, to corrupt and debauch the youth of the nation. Certainly the toleration was never intended to indulge and cherish such monsters and vipers in our bosom, that scatter their pestilence at noon-day, and will rend, distract, and confound the firmest and best settled constitution in the world. It is true, that since these sectarists and sanctified hypocrites have found out a way to swallow not only oaths but sacraments, to qualify themselves to get into places and preferments, they can put on a show of loyalty and seem tolerably easy in the government; but let her Majesty reach out her little finger to touch their loins, and these sworn adversaries to passive obedience and the royal family shall fret themselves, and curse their Queen, and their God, and shall look upwards."

Speaking of the comprehension scheme of Archbishop Tillotson, he says, "This latitudinarian, heterogeneous mixture of all persons of what different faith soever, uniting in Protestancy, would ren-

der the Church of England the most absurd, contradictory, and self-inconsistent body in the world. This spurious and villainous notion, which will take in Jews, Quakers, Mohammedans, and anything as well as Christians, our false brethren have made use of to undermine the very essential constitution of our Church. Her worst adversaries must be let into her bowels under the holy umbrage of sons. To admit this religious Trojan horse, big with arms and ruin into our holy city, the strait gate must be laid quite open ; and the pure spouse of Christ must be prostituted to more adulterers than the scarlet whore in the Revelations. This was indeed a ready way to fill the house of God with pagan beasts instead of Christian sacrifices. Our Church would have been ruined by the blasted and long-projected scheme of these ecclesiastical Ahithophels ; a scheme so monstrous, that even the sectarists of all sorts laughed at it as ridiculous and impracticable."

" Let the Dissenters, those miscreants, begot in rebellion, born in sedition, and nursed up in faction, enjoy the indulgence the Government has condescended to give them ; but let them also move within their proper sphere, and not grow eccentric, and, like comets that burst their orb, threaten the ruin and downfall of our Church and State. They tell us they have relinquished the principles as well as the sins of their forefathers ; but, if so, why do they not renounce their schism, and come sincerely into our Church ? Why do they still pelt the Church with more blasphemous libels, and scurrilous lampoons, than were ever published in Oliver's usurpation ? Have they not lately villainously divided us with knavish distinctions of High and Low Churchmen ? Are not the best characters they give us those of Papists, Jacobites, and conspirators ?"

This firebrand sermon was delivered before the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London, in St Paul's Cathedral, on the 5th of November 1709. The magistrates and common-councilmen gave thanks to the thundering preacher ; the discourse was printed, and above 40,000 copies distributed throughout the kingdom. Parliament met on the 15th of the same month, and the House of Commons at once passed a resolution to the effect, that this sermon, and also another, which on the 15th of August previous Sacheverell had preached at Derby Assizes, " were malicious, scandalous, and seditious libels, highly reflecting upon her Majesty

and her Government, the late happy Revolution, and the Protestant succession, as by law established ;" and ordered that Dr Henry Sacheverell should attend at the bar of the House. Accordingly, on December 14th, Sacheverell went to Westminster, where he was met by a hundred of the most eminent clergymen then resident in and about the capital, including the Queen's own chaplains. The doctor was taken into custody, and impeached at the bar of the House of Lords of high crimes and misdemeanours. After being kept in custody for a month, he was on the 13th of January 1710, admitted to bail. The trial was fixed for February 27th, and the Commons resolved to be present as a committee of the whole House, and a place was prepared for them accordingly in Westminster Hall. The articles of impeachment were four in number, and were urged by the chief members of her Majesty's Government ; while Sacheverell had a council of five gentlemen employed in his defence. When the legal advisers on both sides had said all that they had to say, the doctor was permitted to speak for himself. The scene was immensely imposing. The trial lasted for a period of more than three weeks, from February 27th to the 23d of March. The greatest excitement prevailed both in town and country. It was given out boldly, and in all places, that the Dissenters were about to recover their old ascendancy ; that a design was formed by the Whig Government to pull down the Church ; that the prosecution of Sacheverell was only to try their strength, and that upon their success in it they would proceed to their object openly and fearlessly. The clergy generally espoused Sacheverell as their champion, and used their pulpits in his defence. Many places were full of riot, and little was heard throughout the country except the old war-cry of the Church in danger. In London there was every day a prodigious mob of butchers' boys, chimney-sweepers, scavengers, costermongers, and prostitutes ; and the more respectable class of the citizens began to apprehend that all this drinking and rioting might end in robbing, maiming, and murdering. In Westminster Hall, near the throne, was a box, where the Queen sat, an interested listener, in a private character ; one platform was raised for the managers of the impeachment, and another for the doctor and his counsel. On one side of the hall, benches were erected for the Commons of Great Britain ; and, on the other, accommodations were provided for noble ladies and gentlewomen ;

while, at the end, were galleries for the people in general. When Sacheverell left the hall, on the first day of his trial, to return to his comfortable and well-stocked lodging in the Temple, a countless mob that had stood shouting, during the proceedings in Palace Yard, followed him with tremendous huzzas; the streets were thronged; people of both sexes saluted him from balconies and windows; while the doctor pompously returned these compliments from the chair in which he was being carried, and bowed and nodded like a Chinese mandarin. On the second day of the trial, the mob began to plunder and to burn the Dissenters' meeting-houses. The first attack was upon Mr Burgess's chapel. The pulpit and pews were pulled in pieces; and cushions, Bibles, benches, curtains, sconces, and everything else combustible, were carried into Lincoln's Inn Fields, and set on fire, amid shouts of "High Church and Sacheverell! Sacheverell and High Church!" Five or six other chapels were similarly destroyed. Bishop Burnet's house was threatened, and a man standing at the door had his skull cleft with a spade, because he refused to shout, "The Church and Sacheverell;"* but a detachment of the Guards was called out and the mob dispersed.

As already stated, when the Commons had gone through their charges, and the counsel for Sacheverell had spoken in his defence, he was allowed to speak for himself. It was a noticeable fact, however, that the speech which Sacheverell recited differed so widely from the style of his sermons and other productions, that it was evidently the work of another. The author of Knight's *History of England*, thinks it probable that Sacheverell was assisted in it by the learning of Dr Smalridge and Dr Atterbury, both of whom stood by his side during nearly the whole of his lengthened trial; and others have suspected that, because of the help thus afforded, Sacheverell, by his will, bequeathed Atterbury a legacy of £500. It so happens, however, that all this speculation is beside the mark, for John Wesley most emphatically declares that Sacheverell's defence was written "by the rector of Epworth," his father.† If we are asked for farther evidence of this, we have none to give. John Wesley, without doubt, had the information from his father, and both he and his father, we trust, are above the suspicion of being capable of giving utterance to a

* Burnet's *History*, vol. ii. p. 542.

† Wesley's *History of England*, vol. iv. p. 75.

statement which they knew to be a lie. There was nothing to induce either Wesley or his father to claim the paternity of Sacheverell's defence, if such paternity had not been a fact; and even if circumstances had existed to render it an honourable distinction to be recognised as the author of such a production, John Wesley and his father were among the last men in the world to attempt to secure honour by dishonourable means. Personally we should rejoice if the authorship belonged to Smalridge, Atterbury, or any one sooner than to Samuel Wesley; but, after the explicit declaration of his son, we are *forced* to the belief that Sacheverell's defence was a defence which Wesley wrote for Sacheverell to recite. We regret this for a twofold reason; first, because Sacheverell, however able, was a turbulent priest, not worthy of the help of such a man as the rector of Epworth was; and, secondly, because it proves that Wesley, who began his ministerial life as a moderate Churchman, and an admirer of Archbishop Tillotson, was now a partisan of the High Church clique, and allied with men who regarded the Dissenters with the bitterest hostility. It is true that considering the treatment which Wesley had received from his old friends, the Dissenters, during the last six years, there is no need to be surprised at this; and yet, at the same time, it is a fact which the writer cannot but deplore.

Sacheverell's defence lies before us,* but it is scarce worth quoting. He remarks that the charges against him are very serious; and, for that reason, ought to be sustained by the clearer proofs; whereas all that had been adduced had been "intendments, unnecessary implications, strained constructions, broken sentences, and independent passages." In reference to the first article of impeachment, that he had reflected upon the late revolution, and suggested that the means to bring it about were odious and unjustifiable, he asserts that he did not apply his doctrine of non-resistance to the Revolution; and then contends that so far as the doctrine itself is concerned, it is in perfect accordance with the teachings of the apostles and of the Christian fathers, with the laws of the kingdom, and with the homilies and articles of the English Church. In answer to the second article, that he had defamed

* It is entitled, "The Speech of Henry Sacheverell, D.D., upon his impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords, in Westminster Hall, March 7, 1710.—London, 1710." It was published by Sacheverell himself, and is a small octavo of twenty-four pages.

the Dissenters, and cast scurrilous reflections upon those who favoured and defended liberty of conscience, he admits that he had spoken with some warmth against hypocrites, Socinians, and Deists; but he also contends that he had declared his approval of the indulgence granted to the Dissenters by the law of toleration. As to the third article, that he had said the Church was in danger under her Majesty's administration, he denies it altogether; but, at the same time says, that the Church is in danger from the profaneness and immorality, the heresies and schisms of the kingdom; for "never were the ministers of Christ so abased and vilified, and the Divine authority of the Scriptures so arraigned and ridiculed; never were infidelity and atheism so impudent and barefaced as they are at present." In reference to the fourth article, that he had reproachfully called those, whom the Queen had promoted to high stations in Church and State, spurious and false brethren, he contends that he was as loyal as any man among them, and that his sermons and his whole behaviour proved it. He concluded by declaring that, "whether he was acquitted or condemned, he should always pray for the Queen his sovereign, their lordships, his judges, and the Commons, his accusers; and he trusted that God would deliver them from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart and contempt of His Word; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness."

The result of this remarkable trial was, that, on March 20th, sixty-eight members of the House of Lords found Dr Sacheverell guilty of the high crimes and misdemeanours charged against him by the impeachment of the House of Commons; and fifty-two found him not guilty. Three days after, his sentence was pronounced, to the effect that he should not preach during the three years next ensuing; and that his two printed sermons referred to in the impeachment, should be burnt before the Royal Exchange, on March 27th, by the hands of the common hangman, in the presence of the Lord Mayor of London, and of the Sheriffs of London and Middlesex.

This mild sentence was looked upon by the friends of Sacheverell rather as an acquittal than as a condemnation; and, on that and the following nights, bonfires illuminated the streets of London and Westminster; there was a deluge of ale and beer, and all who passed were compelled to drink the health of the glorious Sacheverell. As for the doctor himself, he was now a

greater man than ever. He returned from Westminster Hall in a grand ecclesiastical triumph. Wherever he went, he was followed by a prodigious train of butchers' boys, link boys, and the like, who made the welkin ring with their enthusiastic shouts. His health was drunk in bumpers at festive gatherings innumerable; and even handkerchiefs and fans were embellished with his portrait. In the month of May, he began his triumphal progress through the kingdom, and was looked upon as another Hercules of the church militant. Wherever he went, his emissaries were sent before him with his portrait; pompous entertainments were made for him; and a mixed multitude of clergymen and sextons, country singers and fiddlers, a mob of all conditions, male and female, crowded together to meet and welcome him. At Exeter, the rabble made bonfires, and broke the windows of a dissenting meeting-house. At Oxford, Hoadley's effigy and books were burned. At Sherborne, some of the mob drank Sacheverell's health, on their knees, in the Town Hall, in the church, and on the church steeple; while others paraded the town, with a drum, cursing the Presbyterians and firing at their houses. At Pontefract, the crowd battered the dissenting chapel, and thought it a high honour to have their children christened Sacheverell. At Gloucester, they kindled bonfires, rang the church bells, and drank Sacheverell's health, with damnation to Dissenters. At Cirencester, they placed the effigy of King William on a diminutive horse, which they made to throw it, in remembrance of the fate that hastened the king's death, and then threw the effigy into a fire. They also had a cock-fight, calling one of the fowls Burgess, and the other Sacheverell; but after a lengthened and hard battle, cock Burgess unfortunately killed cock Sacheverell.* At Bridgenorth, Sacheverell was met by four thousand men on horseback, and as many on foot, wearing white knots, edged with gold. The hedges, for two miles, were dressed with garlands, and the church steeples covered with streamers, flags, and colours.† This clerical progress was made after the dissolution of the Whig parliament, and during the turbulence of a new election, and hence its motives, successes, and excesses may be imagined. The University of Oxford held a feast to welcome the champion of the Church. The stately mansions of the Tory nobility were thrown open at his

* *Complete History of the Affair of Dr Sacheverell.* London, 1711.

† *Wesley's History of England*, vol. iv. p. 76.

approach ; and, in several towns, he was received by the mayors and magistrates in their formalities. The avenues to these towns were lined with spectators, the hedges and trees were hung with garlands of flowers ; flags were displayed on the church steeples ; and the air resounded with cries of " Sacheverell and the Church." After a few weeks, however, sobriety began to return ; the doctor's picture was frequently torn in pieces, and, in many places, he himself was rudely treated. Sacheverell had done his work, and had, more than any other cause, helped the Tories back to their seats of office. In 1713, the Queen presented him to the valuable rectory of St Andrew's, Holborn. The first sermon which he preached in the church of that parish, he sold for £100, and forty thousand copies of it were speedily bought by eager purchasers. After this, he gradually dwindled into insignificance, and signalised himself only, during the remainder of his life, by contemptible squabbles with his parishioners. He died at the age of fifty-two, in 1724. " He was," says Bishop Burnet, " a bold, insolent man, with a very small measure of religion, virtue, learning, or good sense ; but he forced himself into popularity and preferment by the most petulant railings at Dissenters and Low Churchmen !" Daniel Defoe says of him, " Bear-garden language is his peculiar talent. He is known in his books as a pulpit incendiary ; the Church's bloody standard-bearer ; the trumpeter sent out by High Church authority to preach against union, to proclaim open war between parties, and to hang out flags of defiance."

" High Church buffoon, and Oxford's stated jest,
A noisy, saucy, swearing, drunken priest."

Such was the man whom Samuel Wesley helped in an emergency. We are sorry to register such a fact, but truth and honesty compel us. The only excuse which can be suggested is, that during the last few years, the rector of Epworth had been a serious sufferer from dissenting hatred, and that his old dissenting friends were now his bitterest enemies.

The new parliament met on the 25th of November 1710, and the Queen, in her opening speech, showed that she was in the hands of new advisers. She no longer condescended to use the word toleration, but spoke of *indulgence* to be allowed " to scrupulous consciences." This term of *indulgence* was the more observed, because it was the pet word of Sacheverell, who held,

that whatever liberty of conscience Dissenters had, was a matter of indulgence, and not of right. The Whigs were now in a minority, and the Tories were the ruling power.

Convocation, of course, met on the same day as parliament, and of this ecclesiastical synod Samuel Wesley was a member; an honour perhaps awarded him for the service which, at the beginning of the year, he had rendered to Sacheverell. The clergy of the Lower House chose Dr Atterbury, Dean of Carlisle, for their prolocutor; and then came down a royal rescript, very different to that to which they had of late years been accustomed, a licence empowering convocation to enter upon such consultations as the present state of the Church required. The subjects to be discussed were,—1. The late excessive growth of infidelity, heresy, and profaneness; 2. Excommunications, and abuses of commutation money; 3. The visitation of prisoners, and the admission of converts from the Church of Rome; 4. Rural Deans; 5. The glebes and tithes belonging to benefices; 6. Clandestine marriages. As usual, the two houses were at constant variance with each other. Most of the winter was spent in discussing the heresies of Whiston's "*Primitive Christianity Revived*." This learned, ingenious, but eccentric man had succeeded Sir Isaac Newton, in 1703, at Cambridge, as Lucasian Professor of Mathematics; but had recently adopted Arian principles, and published them in the book already mentioned. For this, he was expelled from Cambridge, and was censured by convocation. There was an endless amount of talk; but this was the only business done, when convocation closed on the 12th of June 1711. The House of Commons, however, took into consideration the want of churches in London, and the thanks of the lower house of convocation were presented to them by the prolocutor, who also submitted a scheme for the new churches. On the 7th of May 1711, the Commons resolved to grant to her Majesty £350,000 for the building of fifty new churches, and the purchasing of sites of churches, churchyards, and ministers' houses, in and about the cities of London and Westminster. This magnificent scheme originated in the convocation of which Samuel Wesley was a member; but, of course, it was carried into effect by parliament.*

On the 7th of December 1711, parliament re-assembled, and convocation as well. Convocation did nothing, except discuss

* *Life of Queen Anne*; also, Lathbury's *History of Convocation*.

priestly absolution and lay baptism ; * but parliament signalled itself by passing the notorious "Occasional Conformity Bill," which had been trying to struggle into life for the last ten years.

Whilst Samuel Wesley was attending these sessions of convocation, his wife was doing her utmost to supply his lack of service among his parishioners. The following facts are taken from a letter, dated "Feb. 6, 1711-12," and addressed to "the Rev. Mr Wesley, in St Margaret's Churchyard, Westminster."† After giving a detailed account of the manner in which she had been led to adopt the practice of reading to and instructing her family, Mrs Wesley proceeds to state, that the servant lad had told his parents of these family gatherings, and they desired to be admitted. They told others, who begged the same permission, until these domestic congregations amounted to thirty or forty individuals. Mrs Wesley read to them the best and most awakening sermons she could find, and discoursed with them freely and affectionately. The congregation still grew, until now it numbered above two hundred, and on the Sunday before the letter was written, many had been obliged to go away through there not being room for them to stand.

* At this time, says Bishop Burnet, there appeared an inclination in many of the clergy to a nearer approach to the Church of Rome. Hicks, who was now at the head of the Jacobite party, had, in several books, promoted the notion that there was a proper sacrifice made in the eucharist. He also openly condemned the supremacy of the crown in ecclesiastical affairs, and the method in which the Reformation was carried. One Brett preached a sermon, in several of the pulpits of London, which he afterwards printed, in which he said no repentance could serve without priestly absolution, and affirmed that the priest was vested with the same power of pardoning that our Saviour himself had. Another conceit was the invalidity of lay baptism, and that, as dissenting teachers were laymen, they and their congregations ought to be rebaptized. Dodwell left all who died without the sacraments to the uncovenanted mercies of God ; and maintained that none had a right to give the sacraments except the apostles, and, after them, bishops and priests ordained by them. The bishops thought it necessary to put a stop to such doctrines, and agreed to a declaration against the irregularity of all baptism by persons not in holy orders ; but yet allowing that, according to the practice of the primitive Church, and the constant usage of the Church of England, no baptism ought to be reiterated. Archbishop Sharpe (the friend of Samuel Wesley) refused to sign the declaration, pretending that it would encourage irregular baptisms. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with most of the bishops of his province, submitted the matter to the convocation. It was agreed to in the Upper House, but the Lower House refused even to consider it, because it would encourage those who struck at the dignity of the priesthood. This was all that passed in the convocation of 1712.—(Burnet's *History of His Own Times*, 1st edit., vol. ii. p. 605.)

† *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 313.

Mrs Wesley had thus, unintentionally, become a sort of female preacher. Why did she begin these services? She says, because she thought the end of the institution of the Sabbath was not fully answered by attending church unless the intermediate spaces of time were filled up by other acts of piety and devotion;* but we incline to think there was another reason beside this. Mr Wesley, being so much in London, required a curate to supply his place at Epworth, and it so happened that his curate at this period, Mr Inman, was not so efficient as was desirable. On one occasion, when Wesley returned from London, the parishioners complained that the curate had "preached nothing to his congregation, except the duty of paying their debts, and behaving well among their neighbours." The complainants added, "We think, sir, there is more in religion than this." Mr Wesley replied, "There certainly is; I will hear him myself." The curate was sent for, and was told that he must preach next Lord's-day, the rector at the same time, saying, "I suppose you can prepare a sermon upon any text I give you." "Yes, sir," replied the ready curate. "Then," said Wesley, "prepare a sermon on Heb. xi. 6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'" The time arrived, and the text being read with great solemnity, the curate began his brief sermon, by saying—"Friends, faith is a most excellent virtue, and it produces other virtues also. In particular, it makes a man pay his debts;" and thus he proceeded for about fifteen minutes, when the rector clearly saw that paying debts was the alpha and the omega of the curate's theology. It is scarce likely that the ministry of such a man would satisfy the enlightened mind and religious heart of Susannah Wesley; and it is not to be wondered at that she should try to supply its defects by reading to her children and to two hundred of her neighbours, on Sunday evenings, the best sermons she could find in her husband's library.

The congregations of the rector's wife were probably larger than those of the rector's curate. Inman heard of these gatherings, and wrote to Mr Wesley, complaining that Mrs Wesley, in his absence, had turned the parsonage into a conventicle; that the church was likely to be scandalised by such irregular proceedings, and that they ought not to be tolerated any longer. Mr Wesley wrote to his wife, suggesting that she should let some one else read the sermons.

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1781, p. 313.

She replied that there was not a man among them that could read a sermon without spoiling a good part of it, and that none of her children had a voice strong enough to be heard by so many people. The only thing that disquieted her was "presenting the prayers of the people to God." She had been obliged to do this, but, because of her sex, she doubted its propriety.

The curate still complained, and the rector, writing to his wife, desired that the meetings should be discontinued. She replied that Inman and a man called Whiteley, and one or two others, were the only persons in the parish that had raised complaints; that calling the meeting a conventicle did not alter the nature of the thing; and that, notwithstanding its alleged scandal, it had been the means of bringing more people to the church than anything else had been, for the afternoon congregation had been increased by it from twenty to above two hundred, which was a larger congregation than Inman had been accustomed to have in the morning; some families who seldom went to church now began to go constantly; and one person, who had not been there for seven years, was now attending with the rest. Besides all this, the meetings had been the means of conciliating the minds of the people towards the Wesley family, and they now lived in the greatest amity imaginable. After stating these facts, Mrs Wesley adds:—"If, after all this, you think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you *desire* me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your *positive command* in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ." * What the upshot was we have no means of knowing. John and Charles Wesley were present at these irregular meetings—the first Methodist meetings ever held—Charles a child four years old, and John a boy of nine. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

* Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, p. 54.

CHAPTER XVII.

PRETERNATURAL NOISES.—1716-1717.

FROM the earliest times, men have believed in apparitions, or preternatural appearances of spirits. The Jews, in the days of Moses, were commanded not to suffer a witch to live. The Greeks and the Romans had their demons or genii. In the days of Christ there were demoniacs. Origen conceived that souls tainted by flagrant crimes were either confined in a species of limbo, or attached to particular spots, where within certain limits, they might ramble about at pleasure. Popery, from the first, countenanced and fostered the doctrines of witchcraft and demonology, its priests strengthening their dominion by practising conjurations, and its monks fabricating legends suited to the prevailing taste. Martin Luther believed as firmly in diabolical apparitions as the most illiterate monk in the Popish Church, which he laboured to destroy. And, in more recent times, men like Dr Henry More, Andrew Baxter, and Joseph Glanvil, (all contemporaneous with Samuel Wesley,) wrote most learnedly to prove that the doctrine of apparitions is deducible from the nature of the soul, the testimony of Scripture, and the evidence of fact. On the other hand, most elaborate works against the doctrine were published, about the same period, by the celebrated Thomasius, and by Dr Balthasar Bekker. Down to the sixteenth century, in Europe, witchcraft universally prevailed; and even as late as the middle of the seventeenth century it maintained its ground with considerable firmness. In England, the belief in witchcraft was supported by the royal authority of James I., was countenanced by Lord Bacon, and was generally adopted among the people; and there was only one writer, Reginald Scot, who was hardy enough to write against it. Supposed witches were weighed against the Church Bible, which, if the accused persons were guilty, would preponderate. They were

placed in the middle of a room cross-legged, bound with cords, and sitting on a stool ; were kept without food and sleep for four-and-twenty hours, and were watched all the while to see the witch's imps, in the shape of flies and spiders, come to suck her breasts. They were made to repeat the Lord's prayer, because no witch could repeat it without omitting some of its sentences. A witch could not weep more than three tears, and that only out of the left eye. After binding the right thumb to the left toe, and the right toe to the left thumb, the supposed witch was thrown into a river, and, unless she sank, she was proved guilty ; because, according to the infallible teaching of King James, having renounced her baptism by water, the water renounced her. By such trials as these, and by the accusations of children, old women, and fools, thousands of unhappy persons were condemned for witchcraft, and were burnt to death. Without questioning the reality of such a thing as witchcraft, it cannot be denied that the witnesses, by whose evidence supposed witches were condemned, were, in most cases, either weak enthusiasts or downright villains ; and that the confessions ascribed to the witches themselves were, in many instances, the effects of a disordered imagination, produced by cruel treatment and excessive watchings.

There can be little doubt that, from early life, Samuel Wesley was a believer in the doctrine of apparitions. In vol. i. of the *Athenian Oracle*, (p. 185,) it is assumed that the soul, after its separation from the body, may again be clothed with some sort of aerial, fiery, or cloudy vehicle, and be visible to our senses ; and instances are given of apparitions at Puddle Dock, London, and at the Grange, in Lancashire. In another article of the same volume, (p. 289,) it is said—"That spirits have sometimes really appeared to mortals is, amongst all sober men, beyond controversy ;" and Luke xxiv. 37 is quoted in support of such a theory. In a third article, vol. i. p. 296, ten apparition cases are related, and the writer concludes thus :—"The next step to the disbelieving such things is the denial of the soul's existence out of the body ; and, if that be admitted, farewell all moral virtues and the expectation of rewards and punishments hereafter." Again, page 153, it is argued that there is no nation or language in which there is not some word expressive of the idea of witchcraft, and that, if witches had not really existed, it was an absurd thing for Almighty God to make a law commanding them to be put to death. Many other

articles of a like character may be found in the other volumes of the same work, proving, beyond a doubt, that, at the commencement of his ministerial life, Samuel Wesley believed in witches and in ghosts. We must now proceed to give, in as condensed a form as possible, the account of the old Jeffrey apparition at Epworth Parsonage. For the preservation of that account we are indebted to the Rev. Samuel Badcock, and for its publication to Dr Priestley.

Badcock was born about the year 1750, and, at the age of nineteen, became the minister of one of the most considerable Dissenting congregations in Devonshire. On his removal from Barnstaple, he was elected minister at South Moulton. He now turned his attention to literature, and became a correspondent of the London and monthly reviews, and of the chief London magazines. About three years before his death, which occurred in 1788, he renounced the Dissenting ministry, and was ordained a priest of the Established Church.*

This man, by means of Mrs Earle, the daughter of Samuel Wesley, jun., became possessed of a large mass of Wesley MSS., some of which he published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and in other publications of that period. The rest he gave to his friend Dr Priestley. These included a "copy of Mr Wesley's Diary," and copies of letters written by his daughters to the absent members of the family, all in the hand-writing of Mr Samuel Wesley, jun. This MS. was lent by Priestley to a friend, and for a time was lost; but at length it was restored, and, in 1791, was published. † Priestley, in his preface, says, "This is perhaps the best authenticated, and the best told story of the kind, that is anywhere extant." The account, as published in detail by Dr Priestley, fills forty-seven octavo pages, but every material fact will be found in the condensed statement now subjoined.

The preternatural noises at Epworth parsonage were first heard by Mrs Wesley. This was on the evening of a day when her son Samuel had come home from Westminster School, and, with considerable sharpness, had quarrelled with his sister Susannah. At the time, Mrs Wesley was in her bedroom, and heard a clattering of doors and windows, and then several distinct knocks, three by three. This, however, gave her no anxiety; and, though ever after, similar noises were invariably heard previous to the occur-

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1788.

† *Ibid*, 1785, p. 411.

rence of any family misfortune, yet Mrs Wesley, and, indeed, the family as a whole, seemed to have attached no importance to such disturbances until the close of the year 1716. Then the noises became alarming, and the following is an account of them from that period :—

On the first of December 1716, Nanny Marshall, the maid-servant, heard, at the dining-room door, something which sounded like the groans of a dying man, and which made her hair stand on end. This was in the day-time, and, at night, Miss Susannah and Miss Anne Wesley, whilst sitting in the dining-room, heard something rush on the outside of the doors that opened into the garden, then three loud knocks, immediately after other three, and, in half a minute, the same number above their heads. A night or two after, Emilia came down stairs, at ten o'clock, to wind up the timepiece and lock the doors, as usual, and, as she was doing so, she heard, under the staircase, a sound as if some bottles there had all been dashed to pieces; but, when she looked, all was safe. She also heard a noise, like a person throwing down a vast coal in the middle of the front kitchen; but when she and Susannah went to see what it was, the dog was fast asleep, and nothing out of order. Emilia now went to bed, but Mehetabel, who always waited for her father to leave his study and to retire to rest, was sitting on the lowest step of the garret stairs, when there came down the stairs behind her, something like a man in a loose night-gown trailing after him, which made her fly to Emilia in the nursery. After this, the man-servant, whose dormitory was the garret, heard some one rattling by his side, and then walking up and down the stairs, gabbling like a turkey-cock. Noises, also, were heard in the nursery, and all the other chambers, knocking first at the foot of the beds, and then behind them.

At length the four young ladies, Emilia, Susannah, Mehetabel, and Anne, the youngest of whom was fourteen years of age, and the eldest twenty-four, told their father and mother of the noises they had heard. The father smiled, and gave no answer; but, appearing to think it was a trick played by themselves, or by their lovers, he afterwards took care to see them all in bed before he went to bed himself. The mother said she believed that the noise was made by rats; and sent for a horn to frighten them away. At last, on December 21st, the noises were heard not only by the young ladies, but by their parents. Nine distinct and loud knocks

startled them in the room adjoining that in which they were sleeping. The rector thought, or was pleased to say, it might be some one outside the house, and expressed a hope that his stout mastiff might rid them of the disturber of their peace. Next night, however, he heard six knocks more ; and two days after, at seven in the morning, Emilia brought her mother into the nursery, where she heard noises under the bed, and then at the head of it. She knocked, and it answered her. She looked beneath the bed, and thought she saw something run from thence in the shape of a badger, and apparently take refuge under Emilia's petticoats. The next night but one, Mr Wesley and his wife were awaked, shortly after midnight, by noises so violent that it was in vain to think of sleep while they continued. They went into every chamber ; and, generally, as they entered one room, the noise was heard in the room behind them. Proceeding to the lower part of the house, they heard a clashing among the bottles, and then another distinct sound, as if a peck of money were poured out at Mrs Wesley's waist, and ran jingling down her night-gown to her feet. Going through the hall into the kitchen, the mastiff came whining towards them, and seemed almost paralysed with fear. They still heard it rattle and thunder in every room above and behind them except the study, where, up to the present, it had never entered.

On December 26th, a little before ten at night, it began knocking in the kitchen, then seemed to be at the bed's foot, then under the bed, and at last at the head of it. Mr Wesley went down stairs and knocked with his stick against the kitchen's joists, and it answered him as often as he knocked. He went up stairs, and he found it still thumping, sometimes under the bed, and sometimes at the bed's head. All the children were awake and trembling with fear. He asked it what it was, and why it disturbed innocent children and did not come to him in his study, if it had anything to say to him ; but the only response was a knock on the outside of the house, with which the disturbance of the night was ended.

The next night the noises were as boisterous as ever ; and, the night after, when the Rev. Mr Hoole, of Haxsey, was with them, the knocking again began upstairs, and then in the rooms below. The two clergymen went into the kitchen, and then the sound was in the room above. They went up the narrow stairs, and then heard as it were the rustling of a silk night gown. Quickly it was in

the nursery, at the bed's head, knocking three by three. Mr Wesley, observing that the children, though asleep, were sweating and trembling, became angry, and, pulling out a pistol, was about to fire at the place whence the sounds proceeded; but Mr Hoole caught him by the arm and said, "Sir, if this is something preternatural you cannot hurt *it* by firing your pistol, but you may give it power to hurt *you*." He then put aside his pistol, and went close to the place where the sounds were issuing and said, "Thou deaf and dumb devil, why dost thou frighten children that cannot answer thee? Come to *me* in my study that am a man." Instantly it knocked *his* knock, (the particular knock he always used at his own gate and door,) as if it would shiver the board in pieces, and away it went. *

Up to this time, there had been no disturbance in Mr Wesley's study; but the next evening, as he opened the door, it was thrust back with such violence as well nigh threw him down, and presently there was a knocking, first on one side, then on the other. His daughter Ann was in the room adjoining and he went to her, and, as the noise still continued, he adjured it to speak, but in vain. He then said, "Spirits love darkness; put out the candle and perhaps it will speak." Anne did so, and he repeated his adjuration, but still there was only knocking, and no articulate sound. He then said to his daughter, "Nancy, two Christians are an overmatch for a devil; go down stairs, and it may be, when I am left alone, it will have courage enough to speak." When she was gone the thought occurred to him that something might have happened to his son Samuel, and he said, "If thou art the spirit of my son Samuel, I pray knock three knocks, and no more." Immediately all was silence, and the rest of the night passed away in quietude.†

From this time until January 24, 1717, a period of twenty-seven days, the house was quiet; but on this day, in the morning, while at family prayers, the family heard the usual knocks at the prayer for King George; and at night the knocks were more distinct, both in the prayer for the king and for the prince, and were accompanied with a thundering thump at the *Amen*. Between nine and ten o'clock, while Robert Brown was sitting by himself at the back kitchen fire, something came out of the copper hole like a rabbit, and turned five times swiftly round. Robert ran after it with the tongs, but, to Robert's terrible dismay, it vanished.

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 608.

† *Ibid.*, p. 654.

On the day after, January 25, Mr Wesley shortened the family prayers in the morning, omitting the confession, the absolution, and the prayers for the king and prince, and observed that whenever he did this there was no knocking; but whenever he used the name of King George it seemed a signal for the knocking to commence. This made Wesley so angry that he resolved to say three prayers for the royal family, instead of two.

Emilia often heard something like the quick winding up of a jack at the corner of her room. When Mrs Wesley stamped on the floor it answered her; and when little Kezzia, only six years old, did the same, three loud and hollow knocks were the immediate response. On one occasion, when the man-servant went into the dining-room, something like a badger, without a head, was sitting by the fire, and ran past him through the hall. He followed with a candle and searched, but nothing could be found. On another occasion, to Mr Wesley's no small amazement, his trencher began dancing on the table where the family were dining. Several nights the latch of his bed-room door was lifted; and one night, when the latch of the back kitchen-door was often lifted, Emilia went and held it fast, but it was still lifted up and the door pushed violently against her, though nothing was to be seen outside. Thrice Mr Wesley was pushed by an invisible power, once against the corner of his desk, a second time against the door of the matted chamber, and a third time against the frame of his study door. He often spoke to it to tell him what it was, but never heard any articulate voice, and only once or twice two or three feeble squeaks. As a rule, as soon as the noises began the wind rose, and whistled loudly round the house. It commonly commenced the disturbance at the corner of the nursery ceiling, and, before it came into any room, the latches were frequently lifted up, the windows clattered, and whatever iron or brass was about the chamber rung and jarred exceedingly. Very often the sound seemed to be in the air in the middle of a room. Though it often seemed to rattle down the pewter, to clap the doors, draw the curtains, and kick Robert Brown's shoes about, yet nothing was moved except the latches; unless once, when the nursery-door was thrown open. It is also a remarkable circumstance that the noise never came by day till Mrs Wesley ordered the blowing of the horn; ever after that it almost invariably happened that whenever any member of the family went from one room into another, the latch of the room

they went to was lifted up before they touched it. It also never came into Mr Wesley's study until he talked to it so sharply, and called it a deaf and dumb devil. Mrs Wesley desired it not to disturb her from five to six o'clock in the morning; and, from that time, no noise was heard in her chamber from five till she came down stairs, nor at any other time when she was employed in devotion.

The man-servant, Robert Brown, who slept in the garret, was often so frightened, that he ran down stairs, almost naked, not daring to stay alone to put on his clothes; and the maid-servant, Nanny Marshall, seemed more affrighted than anybody else. Once, when Mary Wesley was by herself in the dining-room, the door seemed to open, and some one entered in a night-gown trailing upon the ground, went leisurely around her, and vanished. A few nights after, Mr Wesley ordered her to light him to his study, and just as he unlocked the door, the latch was lifted for him. When Anne Wesley came into her chamber in the day-time, it commonly walked after her from room to room, and followed her from one side of the bed to the other. When five or six of them were sitting in the nursery together, a cradle seemed to be violently rocked in the room above, though no cradle existed there. One night, when Anne was sitting on the press bed, playing at cards with some of her sisters, the bed was lifted up. She at once leaped down, exclaiming, "Surely old Jeffrey would not run away with *her*." At her sisters' persuasion, she again sat down, when the bed was again lifted up, a considerable height, several times successively. The servant-maid, after churning, on one occasion, took her butter into the dairy, and had no sooner done so than she heard a knocking on the shelf, first above and then below. She took a candle and made diligent search, but finding nothing, threw down butter, tray, and all, and ran away for her very life. Robin Brown, one night, resolved to be a match for "old Jeffrey," and took the large household dog to bed with him; but, despite the dog, the latch began to jar as usual, the turkey-cock to gobble, and the boots and shoes to clatter; until the dog, as much frightened as Robin was, crept into bed to him, and commenced such a howling and barking, that the whole family were alarmed. On another occasion, Robin was grinding corn in the garrets, and happening to stop a little, the handle of the mill began to turn with the utmost swiftness. Robin said, "Nothing

vexed him, but that the mill was empty. If corn had been in it, old Jeffrey might have grinded his heart out for him; he would never have disturbed him."

At length, the family became so accustomed to the noises, that they scarce regarded them. At nights, when the tapping at their beds began, the young ladies would say, "Jeffrey is coming: it is time to sleep;" and, in the day-time, when the noise was heard, little Kezzy, six years old, would run up stairs, and pursue it from room to room, saying, she wished for no better fun. Several gentlemen and clergymen advised Mr Wesley to quit the house; but his invariable answer was, "No; let the devil flee from *me*; I will never flee from *him*." *

• About the middle of February 1717, there seems to have been a cessation of those unearthly noises; hence Mr Wesley wrote to his son Samuel as follows:—

Feb. 11, 1716-7.

"DEAR SAM.,—As for the noises, &c., in our family, I thank God, we are now all quiet. There were some surprising circumstances in that affair. Your mother has not written you a third part of it. When I see you here, you shall see the whole account, which I wrote down. It would make a glorious penny book for Jack Dunton; but, while I live, I am not ambitious for anything of that nature. I think that is all, but blessings from—your loving father,

SAM. WESLEY."

This, however, was far from being the last of old Jeffrey's tricks. At the end of March following, it made Mr Wesley's trencher dance upon the table;† and, on the 31st of that month, after midnight, it opened the dining-room door, where Emilia and the servant-maid were sitting; then shut it; and then began to knock as usual.‡ Indeed, thirty-four years after this, Emilia, who was then Mrs Harper, speaks of still being visited by old Jeffrey, when she was about to be visited by any new affliction;§ and it is reported that even as lately as within the last few years, the then rector of Epworth and his family were residing in London, owing to the repetition of the noises first heard a hundred and fifty years ago in the world-renowned Epworth parsonage.||

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 656. † Priestly, p. 139. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

§ See Clarke's *Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 286. || *Wesleyan Times*, March 7, 1864.

But who was old Jeffrey? At first, Mrs Wesley thought it was the spirit of one of her three sons, Samuel, John, and Charles, then at school in London and Westminster; then she believed it to be the rioting of rats; and, finally, she supposed it betokened the death of her brother, Samuel Annesley, at that time resident in India.

In reply to all this, it may be stated, that the three young Wesleys lived for many a long year after this; it was impossible for freakish or frantic rats to perform all the tricks performed by old Jeffrey; and, finally, the death of Samuel Annesley did not occur until about eight years after Jeffrey began his disturbances.

Samuel Wesley, jun., made the strictest inquiries, and evidently believed it to be a spirit, but for what purpose sent he was unable to conjecture. He writes: "As to my particular opinion concerning the events foreboded by these noises, I cannot, I must confess, form any. I think, since it was not permitted to speak, all guesses must be vain."*

Some have suspected, that it might be all a trick performed by the servants of the family; but then the noises were *often* heard by the family when all the servants were present with them.

Miss Susannah Wesley, and her sisters Emilia, Mary, Mehetabel, and Anne, seem to have had no doubt that the whole affair was supernatural; and the youngest of these five sisters was now fourteen years of age, and therefore able to form something like a correct opinion.

The Rev. Mr Hoole appears to have thought the same, for he prevented Mr Wesley firing his pistol at the spirit, lest the spirit should thereby obtain power to retaliate and injure him.

John Wesley believed that it was a messenger of Satan sent to buffet his father, for the rash vow he made, fifteen years before, and for his leaving his wife for a twelvemonth, because she refused to pray for King William.† We should not quarrel with Mr Wesley for thinking that old Jeffrey was a messenger of Satan; but the fact he mentions, on account of which the messenger was sent, is to a great extent fiction, as we have already shown; and, even were it true, to assign it as a reason for the coming of old Jeffrey, is simply silly and absurd.

Dr Priestley thinks the whole affair was a trick of the servants, assisted by some of their neighbours, for the purpose of puzzling

* *Wesley Family.*

† *Methodist Magazine*, 1784, p. 606.

the family, and amusing themselves;* but how is such a theory to be reconciled with the clashing of bottles beneath the stairs, the repeated appearances of the badger without a head, the sound of the peck of money poured from Mrs Wesley's waist, the noises occurring not only at night but also in the day, the invariable thumping when Mr Wesley prayed for the king and prince, the dancing of Mr Wesley's trencher, his being thrice violently pushed by an unseen power, the fact that the sound frequently seemed to be in the air in the middle of a room, and that however much the Wesleys tried to produce an imitation of the sound, none of them could succeed in doing so. These are difficulties, which those who adopt Dr Priestley's opinion are bound satisfactorily to explain.

The Rev. W. B. Stonehouse, author of "The History and Topography of the Isle of Axholme," accounts for the noises thus: he writes:—"There is a large garret, which extends over the ceilings of all the rooms below, and nothing can be more probable than that some piece of machinery was fixed there, by which all the noises were effected, and which required to be wound up before the performances began." This is childish. Who in Epworth, or the neighbourhood, was able either to devise or to construct such machinery? How was it introduced? Who set it up? Was it invisible? Or is it likely that Samuel Wesley visited and examined all the rooms in the house excepting this?

Dr Adam Clarke believed the thing to be supernatural; and suggests that it may be accounted for by the following story, which was related by a respectable person to himself. One night, after the family had gone to bed, while the maid-servant was finishing her work in the back-kitchen, she was startled by a noise, looked up, and saw a man working himself through a trough, which communicated between the sink-stone within and a cistern without. Astonished and terrified, she seized the cleaver, which lay on the sink-stone, and struck him on the head; after which she uttered an awful shriek, and fell senseless on the floor. Mr Wesley heard the noise, and supposing that the house was beset by robbers, started out of bed, caught up the fire-irons of his study, and began to throw them with violence on the stairs, calling out, Tom! Jack! Harry! as loud as he could bawl, designing, by this means, to scare away the thieves. Who the man was who received the death-blow from the cleaver, or who were his accom-

* Priestley's preface to *Original Letters by John Wesley, &c.*, p. 14.

plices, was never known; but the man was evidently carried off, as footsteps and marks of blood were traced to a considerable distance from the house, but not far enough to find out who the villains were, nor whence they came. Dr A. Clarke fails to tell us when this tragical event occurred.

Southey says, that he is "as deeply and fully persuaded as John Wesley was, that the spirits of the departed are sometimes permitted to manifest themselves;" though he does "not believe in witchcraft, and very greatly doubts the reality of demoniacal possession."* He also asserts that many of the circumstances connected with the disturbances at Epworth parsonage cannot be explained by Dr Priestley's supposition, that the whole thing was a trick of the servants and neighbours; neither "can they be explained by any legerdemain, nor by ventriloquism, nor by any secret of acoustics." And, then, having thus come to the conclusion that the noises were supernatural, he endeavours to account for such occurrences by saying: "It would be end sufficient, if sometimes one of those unhappy persons who, looking through the dim glass of infidelity, see nothing beyond this life, should, from the well-established truth of one such story, be led to a conclusion that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy."†

And, now, though it may seem presumption for one so insignificant as the writer to express an opinion, after stating the opinions of men like those already quoted, yet, at the risk of incurring such opprobrium, he ventures to assert he has thoroughly sifted the whole history, and has read all that has been written concerning it; and that, though he began the examination with the strongest prejudice against the theory that the noises were supernatural, yet, by the force of evidence, which he has been unable to resist, he has been driven to the conclusion that the thing was not a trick, but that the noises and other circumstances were occasioned by the direct and immediate agency of some unseen spirit.

If asked to express an opinion whether the spirit was good or bad, the writer would say, the latter. "About a year since," says Emilia Wesley, "there was a disturbance at a town near us that was undoubtedly occasioned by witches; and, if so near, why

* *Wilberforce's Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 390.

† *Southey's Life of Wesley*.

may they not reach us? Then, my father had, for several Sundays before old Jeffrey came, preached warmly against consulting those that are called cunning men, which our people are given to; and it had a particular spite at my father.”*

If asked again, What good end was to be answered by permitting such supernatural disturbances? the writer answers, that his own opinion thoroughly coincides with Southey’s, already given. It is worse than absurd to suppose that God permits such occurrences to happen without some great purpose to be accomplished; and, for this reason, such occurrences are extremely rare. Mrs Wesley was of this opinion, as the following extract, from an unpublished letter to her son John, will show:—

“WROOTE, Nov. 1724.

“DEAR JACK,—The story of Mr B. has afforded me many curious speculations. I do not doubt the fact, but cannot receive it without reason why those apparitions should come to us. If they were permitted to speak to us, and we had strength to bear such converse; if they had commission to inform us of anything relating to their invisible world, that would be of any use to us in this; if they could instruct us how to avoid any danger, or put us in a way of being wiser or better—there would be sense in it; but to appear for no end that we know of, unless to frighten people almost out of their wits, seems altogether unreasonable.”

No doubt of it; and, for that reason, there was unquestionably a great end to be answered by the supernatural noises at Epworth parsonage.

The Wesley family were foreordained to exercise upon succeeding generations, and upon mankind at large, an influence, the effects of which are without a parallel; and, to qualify them for such a work, it is not surprising that a more than ordinary agency should have been employed. No man can really be in earnest in converting sinners unless he has, not merely opinions respecting an unseen world, but a deep and *felt* conviction that such a world exists. The minister, without such a deep and vivid conviction, may perform ministerial functions, but he has no anxiety about real ministerial success. On the other hand, let the man *feel*, in his heart and conscience, that there is a heaven, and that there is

* Priestley, p. 138.

a hell, and it becomes impossible for such a man to be indifferent respecting the souls of his fellow-men. He knows that every unconverted sinner whom he meets is exposed to danger infinitely more fearful than any mere earthly danger the mind can contemplate ; and hence you find in him, not merely the polite reproof, the gentle warning, the Scripture exposition, or the perfunctory discharge of some other ministerial duty ; but you also find intense earnestness, which is sometimes considered fanaticism, and almost insanity ; and you likewise very often find efforts used, and expediences employed, in converting men which shock the refined tastes and delicate sensibilities of many who are more politely than earnestly religious ; and which from men of another class—the avowedly profane and disbelieving—provoke contempt and persecution. Yes ; and the deeper, and more living and influential, becomes the man's conviction of the existence of heaven, of hell, of angels, of devils, and of the other great certainties of the world to come—the more impellent becomes his earnestness, and the more excited and self-sacrificing are his labours to turn men from sin to holiness, and from the power of Satan unto God.

Let it be granted that this is true, and then there is no difficulty in perceiving that it was important, in the highest degree, that a man like John Wesley should have convictions and feelings in reference to the unseen world far stronger and deeper than those which men, and even ministers, ordinarily have ; and that there is no need to wonder at the strange, the mysterious, the supernatural events that happened in his father's house ; inasmuch as the direct tendency of these events was to create, or strengthen and intensify, the convictions and feelings already mentioned.

That such an effect was produced we have undoubted evidence. Emilia Wesley, writing to her brother Samuel at the time, says : "I am so far from being superstitious, that I was too much inclined to infidelity ; and I therefore heartily rejoice at having such an opportunity of convincing myself, past doubt or scruple, of the existence of some beings besides those we see."* This is remarkable language for a young, educated lady, twenty-four years of age, to use in reference to ghosts. So far from shuddering at the thought of having heard and seen a ghost, she heartily rejoices, because the unusual and strange occurrence had strengthened her

* *Priestley's Letters*, p. 135.

Scriptural belief, and convinced her, beyond a doubt, of an unseen, vast, and eternal world.

John Wesley was at the Charter-House School, London, and therefore was not an eye and an ear witness of the disturbances in his father's parsonage; but, of course, he heard of them, and that they produced the same effect in him which they produced in his sister Emilia, is a fact which no one can reasonably call in question. If there be one feature more striking than another in John Wesley's religious character, it is his deep-rooted, intense, animated, powerful, impelling conviction of the dread realities of an unseen world. Without this, Wesley never would and never could have braved so much opprobrium, endured so much suffering, and undergone so much toil for the sole and single purpose of saving souls. This great conviction took possession of the man, he loved it, he cherished it, he tried to impress it upon all his helpers and upon all his people; and the result of the whole was the calling into action an agency, which, for earnestness of feeling, oneness of aim, enthusiastic faith, pleading prayer, unwearied labour, martyr courage, and spiritual success, will bear comparison with any agency, which, in any age, it has pleased the great Head of the Christian Church to call and use, in saving sinners from the agonies of bottomless perdition.

"With my latest breath," says John Wesley, "will I bear testimony against giving up to infidels one great proof of the invisible world, I mean that of witchcraft and apparitions, confirmed by the testimony of all ages.* The English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all account of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it; and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment, which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge, these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation, in direct opposition not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up of witchcraft is, in effect, giving up the Bible; and they know on the other hand, that, if but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, their whole

* *Wesley's Works*, vol. xiv. p. 276.

castle in the air—Deism, Atheism, Materialism—falls to the ground. I know no reason, therefore, why we should suffer even this weapon to be wrested out of our hands. It is true that there are numerous arguments besides this which abundantly confute their vain imaginations, but we need not be hooted out of one; neither reason nor religion requires this. One of the capital objections which I have known urged over and over is, ‘Did you ever see an apparition yourself?’ No, nor did I ever see a murder; yet I believe there is such a thing. The testimony of unexceptionable witnesses fully convinces me both of the one and the other.”*

This was the opinion, not of a young enthusiast, but of a scholar, a Christian, a minister, and an author, now in the sixty-sixth year of his age. John Wesley has been censured for his credulity; but did he merit this? I doubt it. Southey says that “he invalidated his own authority by listening to the most absurd tales with implicit credulity, and recording them as authenticated facts.”†

In reply, I venture to assert that Wesley never contended for anything but what Southey himself admits in the passage from his writings, already quoted—viz., that “the spirits of the departed are sometimes permitted to manifest themselves,” and that the reason why such apparitions are permitted or ordered, is to convince “those unhappy persons, who looking through the dim glass of infidelity, see nothing beyond this life, that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy?” This admits all that John Wesley argued for. Besides, it must be borne in mind, that though John Wesley inserts not a few “strange accounts” of apparitions, &c., in his journals and in his magazine, it is not true that he says he believed them all. He simply relates some as they had been related to himself, and leaves the reader to form his own opinion. In reference to others, he boldly expresses a firm belief in their truthfulness, because he had received them on testimony the most credible; and this, be it observed, is exactly what Mr Southey does in reference to the “strange accounts” of the disturbances in the Epworth Parsonage; so that if Wesley, the Reformer, deserves censure for credulity, Southey, the poet-laureate, deserves just the same.

The reader will excuse what, perhaps, is deemed a lengthened

* *Wesley's Works*, vol. iii. p. 108.

† *Southey's Life of Wesley*.

digression ; but it was impossible, in a life of Samuel Wesley, sen., to pass over the strange noises in his house, and having related them, it would have been cowardly in the biographer to have shrunk from expressing an opinion concerning them. My carefully-formed opinion is, that the noises were really supernatural, and that the end to be answered was specially to qualify certain members of the Wesley family for the special work for which God had fore-ordained them.

This opinion may seem wild and extravagant, but it has not been formed from prejudice or without research. The examination was commenced with a persuasion that it would be possible to explain all the accounts of the Epworth noises on Priestley's supposition that the whole affair was a clever trick, performed by Wesley's servants, or Wesley's enemies, or by both united ; and, indeed, there was a secret wish in the writer's heart that it might be so. With Southey, however, and others, he found this to be impossible, and hence there was nothing for it but to believe that the noises were supernatural, and to suggest a reason for their occurrence. This has been done as fairly and as honestly as the writer has had ability to do it ; and now, expecting to be ridiculed, he entreats the reader not to skim the matter hastily, but to sift it for himself, remembering John Wesley's words :—"If but one account of the intercourse of men with spirits be admitted, the whole castle in the air—Deism, Atheism, and Materialism—falls to the ground" at once.

There can be no doubt that ninety-nine ghost stories out of a hundred are fanatical fabrications, but to say that such things as witchcraft and apparitions do not exist is, to use the words of Dr Anthony Horneck, to play more hocus-pocus tricks with the Holy Scriptures than, as it is alleged, the witch of Endor did in raising the prophet Samuel. In former times men had a propensity to believe too much, at present the propensity is to believe too little. To philosophic unbelievers, witchcraft and apparitions may seem impossible and absurd, but the Bible establishes the fact that such things have existed ; and never gives the least intimation that they are not again to be permitted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LAST TWENTY YEARS—1714-1735.

SAMUEL WESLEY was born two years after the restoration of Charles II. He lived throughout the reigns of Charles, of James II., of William III., and Queen Mary, of Queen Anne, and of George I., and during the first eight years of the reign of George II. This covers a period of English history which, in thrilling interest and importance, is not surpassed by any other period within the compass of English annals.

Queen Anne died in the year 1714, and her death led to the immediate accession of George, Electoral Prince of Hanover, the great-grandson of James I. After reigning thirteen years, he was succeeded, in 1727, by his son, George II.

The last twenty years of Mr Wesley's life were full of great events. Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Oxford, and the Duke of Ormond, were all impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours; Oxford was committed to the Tower; Bolingbroke and Ormond escaped to France, and there intrigued for the restoration of the Stuarts. The Earl of Mar erected the standard of James, the Pretender, son of James II., at Braemar, in Scotland, and the three Earls of Hume, Wigtown, and Kinnoul, Lord Deskford, and others, were arrested and laid fast in Edinburgh Castle. Mr Forster and the Earl of Derwentwater raised an insurrection in Northumberland, and proclaimed the Pretender, at Warkworth, with sound of trumpet. The insurgents marched to Preston, in Lancashire, where they relinquished their arms, and Forster, Derwentwater, and many other persons of distinction, were taken prisoners. The gaols of the north were filled with non-juring Protestants, High Church divines, Popish priests and monks, Jacobite squires, Highland chiefs, and Lowland lairds. Not a few of these were shot in heaps, and the rest, above five hundred, were left to starve

of hunger and of cold. Meanwhile, the Pretender himself landed at Peterhead, made his public entry into Dundee, held a council at Perth, and ordered the burning of all the towns, villages, corn, and forage between Perth and Stirling,—an order which was too terribly carried into execution, the poor inhabitants, women and children, the aged and the infirm, being exposed to the extremities of the season in one of the coldest winters that had been known for many generations. Numbers of the poor sufferers perished of cold and hunger, and mothers, with their infants at the breast, were found dead among drifts of snow. The Pretender ultimately made a cowardly escape to France, and the Earl of Derwentwater, and many others, were executed for high treason.

In the meantime, George I. quarrelled with his son, the Prince of Wales, about the christening of a baby, upon which his Royal Highness, being arrested and ordered to quit St James's Palace, fixed his residence at Leicester House, which became the resort of the disaffected of all classes, and the centre of an increasing turmoil and intrigue.

The South Sea Company Bill was passed by Parliament, and the whole nation became intoxicated with percentages, dividends, and transfers. The stock suddenly rose from 130 to above 1000 per cent. Bubble companies sprang up round the mighty original like mushrooms round a rotten tree, and prospectuses were issued for making salt water fresh, for extracting silver out of lead, for importing asses from Spain to improve the breed of mules, for fattening hogs, for a wheel for perpetual motion, and for a thousand other things besides. 'Change Alley was crammed from morning till night with dukes, lords, country squires, parsons, Dissenting ministers, brokers, and jobbers, and men of every possible colour and description. Even the Prince of Wales became a governor of a Welsh Copper Company, and made a gambling profit by the illegal transaction of not less than £40,000. The bubbles soon burst. The South Sea stock, which sold in August at 1000, in September sunk below 300, and in November fell down to 135. Terrible excitement followed; disgraceful facts were published, and thousands of persons beggared. One of the political results was a change of government. Sunderland had to resign the premiership, and Robert Walpole, Earl of Oxford, the high Tory, and one of the friends of Sacheverell, became prime minister, and, despite incessant attacks from political enemies of the most

splendid talents, retained the high office for two and twenty years.

About the same time, the Polish wife of the Pretender gave birth to a son at Rome, in the presence of seven cardinals. The child, at a most royal christening, received the name of Charles Edward, and the event was proclaimed by the Jacobites in all parts of the United Kingdom. New plots against King George, and in favour of the Pretender and his infant child, were concocted, Bishop Atterbury being the chief of the intriguers. Atterbury and his friends engaged to get possession of the Tower, the Bank, and the Exchequer, and to proclaim King James III., simultaneously, in different parts of the country. The scheme exploded, and Lord North, Lord Orrery, and the Duke of Norfolk were arrested. Atterbury was brought before the Privy Council, and was committed to the Tower. The High Church party cried aloud against the sacrilegious arrest of a bishop. The clergy in London and Westminster offered public prayer for him. Alexander Pope, his bosom friend, was among Atterbury's witnesses. The bishop was deprived of his bishopric, and banished from his country. He at once threw himself into the service of the Pretender, and became his confidential agent, first at Brussels, and afterwards at Paris. He died in exile in 1731.

George I. died of apoplexy, in 1727, whilst travelling with one of his mistresses, the Duchess of Kendal, to Hanover. At the time, the little, beggared, and vagabond court of the Pretender was distracted with all kinds of intrigues, jealousies, and animosities. Atterbury continued to cabal with priests, monks, and mistresses. James wished to make one more effort to obtain the throne of his fathers, but Atterbury could afford him no encouragement, and the scheme was dropped until it was revived by his son, Charles Edward, in 1745.

The principal ecclesiastical events which occurred during the decline of Mr Wesley's life, were the censure pronounced by the Lower House of Convocation, in 1714, upon Dr Samuel Clark's famous book, entitled, "The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity;" and the bitter and long-continued controversy arising out of Bishop Hoadley's "Preservative against the Principles and Practices of the Nonjurors," in the course of which Sherlock, Potter, and Hare took a prominent position, and not fewer than about seventy different publications were produced.

The social, moral, and religious condition of the country was still far from satisfactory. Gentlemen wore tie-wigs, and, instead of swords, carried large oak sticks, with great heads and ugly faces carved thereon; while ladies, when walking out of doors, wore masks, hooped petticoats, and scarlet cloaks. Places of political resort, called mug-houses, were established in all parts of London, where citizens and tradesmen attacked the Tories with such bitterness, under the double inspiration of ale and patriotism, that at length the mug-houses had to be suppressed by Act of Parliament. Royal mistresses were maintained at court, as a state appendage, and thereby public immorality was kept in countenance. The mercantile classes grew in wealth, and all who were of any respectability had the title of *esquire* appended to their names, so that Steele complains that England had now become a nation of esquires. The streets of London were still, for the most part, unpaved, and the kennels on both sides were usually choked up with all sorts of garbage. Pickpockets were numerous, and purses, snuff-boxes, and watches disappeared with a facility incomprehensible to the owners. The metropolis could boast of not more than a thousand lamps, which were kept burning only till midnight, and that for only one-half of the year. Prize fights were frequent, the gladiators, who mangled themselves with swords and daggers for the amusement of the crowd, subsisting upon the subscription purses and the admittance fees. In the country, the monotonous toils of the peasantry were enlivened chiefly by wakes and fairs, thronged with puppet shows, pedlars' stalls, raffling tables, and drinking booths. Among the favourite competitions at fairs, were grinning matches, in which the candidates grinned most hideously through a horse's collar; and trials in whistling, where the person who could whistle through a whole tune without being put out by the drolleries of a merry-Andrew that were played off before him, was the victor. At Christmas, trials of yawning for a Cheshire cheese took place at midnight, and he who gave the widest and most natural yawn, so as to set the whole company agape in sympathy, carried off the cheese in triumph. Young damsels, anxious to know something of their future husbands, were directed to run until they were out of breath, as soon as they heard the first notes of the cuckoo, after which, on pulling off their shoes, they would find in them a hair of the same colour as that of their future mates. On May-day, a girl had only to bring home a snail,

and lay it upon the ashes of the hearth, and, in crawling about, the reptile would mark the initial letter of her true love's name. It is true, that the belief in antique rites like these was fast departing, but still such spells were practised in many a peasant's hut and farmer's home long after Mr Wesley's death.

Towards the end of the reign of George I. the wages of a farm bailiff were not above £6 a year; and of other farm-servants, from £2 10s. to £5. The wages of female servants were from thirty to fifty shillings yearly. Masons, carpenters, and plumbers received a shilling a day without meat, or sixpence a day with it. Wheat sold for about five shillings a bushel, but the great bulk of the people were too poor to purchase it. Even families that were reputed rich used not more than a peck of wheat a year, and that was used at Christmas. Bread loaves and pie crusts were made of barley-meal, and puddings and dumplings, made of oatmeal and suet, were a common dish at rural entertainments. The price of beef and mutton was about 2½d. per pound, of butter, about 5d., and of Cheshire cheese, about 3d.*

The period which we are now sketching had a fair average of men of genius and learning. Wake was Archbishop of Canterbury. Kennett, an intense student, presided over the diocese of Peterborough. Edmund Gibson, a man of great natural abilities, filled the see of London. John Potter, the son of a Yorkshire linen-draper, worked his way up to the primacy. Hoadley, the Bishop of Winchester, was described as the greatest Dissenter that ever wore a mitre. William Sherlock was writing his celebrated "Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus." Daniel Waterland was defending the doctrine of the Trinity against the attacks of Samuel Clarke, and the truth of revealed religion against Tindal, the infidel. Bishop Butler was composing his "Analogy of Religion." Warburton was equipping himself for a diocese, and for the writing of his "Divine Legation." Dean Prideaux was composing his "Connexion of the Old and New Testaments." Bishop Lowth was busy with his invaluable works on Hebrew poetry, &c. Thomas Stackhouse was preparing his "History of the Bible." George Lavington was developing the talents which he afterwards employed in writing "The Enthusiasm of the Papists and Methodists Compared," and William Law, the well-known author of the "Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," had abandoned the pulpit,

* Knight's *History of England*.

and become tutor to Edward Gibbon, the father of the great historian.

Among Dissenters, Edmund Calamy was preaching and writing almost unceasingly. Isaac Watts was an inmate of Abney House, and was composing hymns which have been sung by myriads. Nathaniel Lardner was completing his "Credibility of the Gospel History." Samuel Chandler was lecturing at the Old Jewry Chapel. Philip Doddridge had opened his Dissenting Academy at Northampton. Daniel Neal was publishing his "History of the Puritans;" and John Leland was answering Tindal's "Christianity as Old as the Creation."

Belonging to other classes of distinguished men living at this period, are Sir Isaac Newton, who, in 1727, was buried with great magnificence in Westminster Abbey; Edmund Halley, who was Newton's highly respected friend; Sir Hans Sloane, who succeeded Newton as the President of the Royal Society; Nicholas Saunderson, the son of a Yorkshire exciseman, blind from infancy, and yet one of the most illustrious mathematical professors that the University of Cambridge ever had; William Emerson, who, with a dirty wig half off his head, his shirt buttoned behind, and inexpressibles that disdained the aid of braces, wrote books connected with almost every branch of the science of mathematics; Richard Bentley, the son of a Yorkshire blacksmith, who rose to the high office of Regius Professor of Divinity, and of whom Stillfleet remarked, that "had he but the gift of humility, he would be the most remarkable man in Europe;" Sir Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, Alexander Pope, John Gay, James Thomson, Matthew Prior, and William Congreve, may all be mentioned in a cluster; Edward Young, whose "Night Thoughts" have immortalised his memory; but who was a poet of high distinction long before they were thought about, having, in 1728, received from Wharton for his satire entitled "The Universal Passion," the enormous sum of £3000; Samuel Johnson, who, at the time of Samuel Wesley's death, was writing his first work for the press, "Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia;" Allan Ramsay, who was revolving in his mind the thoughts and charms of his "Gentle Shepherd;" Edward Cave, the son of a shoemaker, who was now meditating how to carry into effect his long cherished-scheme of the *Gentleman's Magazine*; William Croft, who was revelling among his musical compositions; Handel, who, in his enormous

white wig, was putting together his unrivalled oratorios; Sir Godfrey Kneller, who was painting heads to ready-made bodies with inconceivable rapidity; Dahl, Richardson, Jervas, and others, who were clothing their portraits with loose drapery, the costume of no age or nation whatever; Hogarth, who was rising to the zenith of his fame; and Roubiliac, whose chisel was giving to the marble a vitality which almost breathed.

These are a few of the distinguished men who flourished during the last twenty years of Samuel Wesley's life; and among them he himself was not the least eminent. It was during this period that he prepared and wrote the greatest work that proceeded from his prolific pen, entitled "*Dissertationes in Librum Jobi—Autore, Samuele Wesley, Rectore de Epworth in Dioecesi Lincolnensi.*" The work is a large-sized folio of more than 600 pages, of good paper, and beautifully printed. It is written in Latin, intermixed with innumerable Hebrew and Greek quotations.

Mr Wesley was employed upon this remarkable work for more than five and twenty years. It was first begun previous to the burning of his parsonage, in 1709. He had carefully read the book of Job, first in the Hebrew text, and secondly in that of the Greek Septuagint. These he collated together, making, as he proceeded, the notes and observations that occurred to him. He then procured Walton's great Polyglott Bible, containing the Sacred Text in the Hebrew and Greek languages; the Pentateuch in Samaritan; the Psalms and the New Testament in Syriac, Arabic, Chaldaic, and Ethiopic; the four Gospels in Persic; together with the Septuagint and Vulgate versions of both Testaments. Collating what he had already done with the versions of the book of Job in Walton's Polyglott, he greatly increased his notes and observations. He had proceeded thus far, when the fire of 1709 broke out, and every leaf of his Polyglott and of his collections on Job were utterly destroyed.

He procured another Polyglott and recommenced his studies. The Hebrew text was read over again and again. The Alexandrian and Vatican editions of the Septuagint were diligently compared. All the variations in the Chaldee, Arabic, and Syriac versions, with the principal critics, as exhibited in Pool's "*Synopsis*," together with all the fragments of Origen's "*Hexapla*," were carefully collated. Tindal's and the Bishop's Bible were compared. All the commentators within his reach were consulted. Pliny,

Salmasius, Mercator, Jerome, Eusebius, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Luitsius, Sanson, Purchas, Hakluyt, De la Valle, Pentinger, Bochart, Calmet, Pineda, Spanheim, Hyde, Bunting, Greaves, Sandys, Usher, Lloyd, Marshall, Reyland, and Maundrell, were all laid under contribution to his work. Accompanied by his son John, he visited, in 1733, the library of Lord Milton at Wentworth House, and acknowledges that without the kindness of his lordship, the work would have come into the world mutilated, or would have perished as an abortion. While at Wentworth House, their stay was prolonged over the Sabbath, and John Wesley occupied the pulpit of Wentworth Church to the no small gratification of the parishioners.*

Mr Wesley also received assistance from Maurice Johnson, Esq., who was a distinguished antiquarian, and the founder of the Gentleman's Society at Spalding, of which many of the greatest men in the nation, including Sir Isaac Newton, Alexander Pope, Sir Hans Sloane, and Samuel Wesley, were members. Johnson was born at Spalding, was a student of the Inner Temple, London, married early a lineal descendant of Sir Thomas Gresham, had twenty-six children, and was the possessor of a fine collection of plants and medals. He was held in high esteem for the frankness and benevolence of his character, and was always ready to communicate the results of his literary researches to all who applied to him for information.† He contributed one of the maps to Mr Wesley's "Book of Job;" and also one of the dissertations on "Job's Jurisprudence."‡

Assistance was also received from Roger Gale, Esq.,§ a gentleman who was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge; possessed a considerable estate at Scruton, Yorkshire; was Member of Parliament for Northallerton, the first Vice-President of the Society of Antiquaries, and was considered one of the most learned men of his age. He died at Scruton, in 1744, universally esteemed, and left all his MSS. and Roman coins to his alma mater, Cambridge University.||

Mr Wesley was further assisted by his three sons, Samuel,

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 327., and Everett's *Methodism in Sheffield* p. 7.

† Nicholl's *Literary Anecdotes*.

‡ Clarke's *Wesley Family*, and Nicholl's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. iv. p. 548.

§ Nicholl's *Ibid.*

|| Chambers's *Biographical Dictionary*.

John, and Charles, who did everything in the work that dutiful sons should do for an aged parent.

During the last few years of his life, Mr Wesley suffered most painfully from the gout and palsy, and hence found it necessary to employ an amanuensis. Two gentlemen who were employed in this capacity, in writing the "Dissertations on the Book of Job," were John Romley and John Whitelamb.

We have no information of Romley's origin, except that he studied divinity under Samuel Wesley; graduated at Lincoln College, Oxford; and was for a time Mr Wesley's curate. He was a member of the Gentleman's Society at Spalding; and, in 1730, presented to that society an "Account of the Manors, Villages, Seats, and Church of Althorp, in Lincolnshire." * It is also stated, in Nicholl's "Literary Anecdotes," that he was school-master at Wroote. Seven years after Mr Wesley's death, he was curate of Epworth, and refused to allow John Wesley either to read the prayers or to preach in Epworth church, and, in Wesley's presence, delivered a florid and oratorical sermon on enthusiasts, which led Wesley to preach the same evening on his father's tombstone to such a congregation as Epworth had never seen.† Seven months afterwards, John Wesley preached again on the same sacred spot, and, on asking Romley's permission to receive the sacrament, received as an answer, "Tell Mr Wesley I shall not give him the sacrament, for he is not *fit*."‡ In August 1744, he was again at Epworth, and heard Romley preach two sermons so "exquisitely bitter and totally false" as he had never heard before. In May 1745, when he was again present, Romley's "sermon, from beginning to end, was another railing accusation." § Three years after this, Romley had lost his "soft, smooth, tuneful voice, without hope of recovery, and spoke in a manner so shocking to hear that it was impossible for him to make himself heard by one quarter of his congregation." || He also became a tippler, and was sometimes "so drunk that he could scarce stand or speak." ¶ In 1751, he became mad, and had to be confined. During the first week of his confinement, he was for constraining every one that came near him to kneel down and pray; and frequently cried out, "You will be lost, you will be damned,

* Clarke's *Wesley Family* and Nicholl's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. vi. p. 110.

† Wesley's *Works*, vol. i. p. 354.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 465.

|| *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 99.

¶ *Ibid.*, vol. viii. p. 29.

unless you know your sins are pardoned." Two or three weeks afterwards he died.* Such was one of the men who helped Samuel Wesley in the preparation of his great work, "*Dissertationes in Librum Jobi*."

The other amanuensis was John Whitelamb, who was born in the neighbourhood of Wroote, and received the rudiments of his education at an endowed school, established there in 1706, in accordance with the will of Mr Travers, who bequeathed three hundred and seventy-nine acres of land for the support of schools at Wroote, Hatfield, and Thorne. The school was placed under the care of Romley, who recommended Whitelamb to the notice of Mr Wesley as a lad of promising abilities. Mr Wesley took Whitelamb to his house at Epworth, where he became his amanuensis in place of Romley, and, for four years, was employed in transcribing his "*Dissertations on the Book of Job*;" and in designing the illustrations for it, several of which were engraved with his own hand.

Under the care of the Rector of Epworth, young Whitelamb obtained a sufficient knowledge of Latin and Greek to enter the university; and at the expense, chiefly, of Mr Wesley's family, he was maintained at Lincoln College, Oxford, where he obtained his education gratis under Mr John Wesley, then a fellow of that seat of learning. In a letter to his father, dated "June 11, 1731," John Wesley says: "John Whitelamb reads one English, one Latin, and one Greek book alternately; and never meddles with a new one in any of the languages till he has ended the old one. If he goes on as he has begun, I dare take upon me to say, that, by the time he has been here four or five years, there will not be such a one of his standing in Lincoln College, perhaps not in the University of Oxford."†

Mrs Wesley used to call Whitelamb "poor starveling Johnny," and no wonder; for John Wesley writing to his brother, Samuel, a few months after the date just given, says; "John Whitelamb wants a gown much, and I am not rich enough to buy him one at present,"‡ and he then states his purpose to use his influence among his friends to beg the money requisite to make the purchase.

In 1733, Whitelamb became Samuel Wesley's curate, and was

* *Wesley's Works*, vol. ii. p. 221. † *Ibid.*, vol. xii. p. 6. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

married to his daughter, Mary. In one short year he became a widower, and was so overwhelmed with grief that he wished to get away from the scene of his sorrows, and to embark in the contemplated mission to Georgia.

On the 6th of June 1742, John Wesley, being refused the use of the Epworth church, preached standing upon his father's tombstone. Whitelamb, who was then the rector at Wroote, was one of his congregation, and, five days after, wrote him a most touching letter. He says: "I saw you at Epworth. Fain would I have spoken to you, but that I am quite at a loss how to address you. Your way of thinking is so extraordinary that your presence creates awe, as if you were an inhabitant of another world. I retain the highest veneration and affection for you. The sight of you moves me strangely. My heart overflows with gratitude. I feel, in a high degree, all that tenderness and yearning of bowels with which I am affected towards every branch of Mr Wesley's family. I cannot refrain from tears, when I reflect this is the man who at Oxford was more than a father to me.

"I am quite forgot. None of the family ever honours me with a line! Have I been ungrateful? I appeal to sister Patty; I appeal to Mr Ellison whether I have or no. I have been passionate, fickle, a fool; but I hope I shall never be ungrateful.

"Dear sir, is it in my power to serve or to oblige you in any way? Glad I should be that you should make use of me. God open all our eyes and lead us into truth, whatever it be.

"JOHN WHITELAMB." *

John Wesley did make use of him, for, two days after, he preached twice in Whitelamb's church †; a circumstance which gave great offence to the High Church party, and was likely to involve Whitelamb in considerable trouble at the approaching triennial visitation. ‡

John Wesley says that at this time, and for some years after, Whitelamb did not believe the Christian revelation. § I can hardly understand this, unless it arose out of Whitelamb stating to Charles Wesley that he looked upon the doctrines preached by himself and his brother "as of ill consequence," and that he had great reason to think that, what he calls "the seal and testimony of the Spirit

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1778, p. 183.

† *Wesley's Works*, vol. i. p. 356.

‡ *Methodist Magazine*, 1778, p. 185.

§ *Ibid.*

was, in the generality of their followers, merely the effect of a heated fancy."* In the same letter, however, he speaks of John Wesley in the kindest terms, and says—"He behaved to me truly like himself. I found in him what I have always experienced heretofore, the gentleman, the friend, the brother, the Christian."

Whitelamb died in July 1769,† and was succeeded by a member of the Whitelamb family, who was remarkable for his various learning, and especially for his skill in mathematics.‡

In 1844, there was an aged female at Wroote, who remembered John Whitelamb, and had been a scholar in his school. She described him as a person of retiring habits, and fond of solitude. She was present when he was suddenly seized, on his way to perform divine service at the church, with the illness which shortly terminated in his death; and stated that his funeral was attended by a considerable number of clergymen, who thus paid their last tribute of respect to a departed friend.§ On a small stone in the churchyard, about two feet long and one foot broad, is the following inscription:—In memory of John Whitelamb, Rector of this Parish thirty-five years. Buried 29th July 1769, aged 62 years. Worthy of imitation. This at the cost of Francis Wood, Esq., 1772."||

Dr Adam Clarke says Whitelamb was a Deist; and John Wesley says that for years he did not believe the Christian revelation. As to Dr Clarke's assertion, I demur to it *in toto*; and, as to Mr Wesley's I agree with Southey in regarding it as a hasty and loose expression, only applicable to the peculiar—the great and glorious doctrines—which Wesley and his band of helpers were the means of rescuing from oblivion, and of propagating throughout the land. Still Wesley always regarded him as a backslider, and, after his death, exclaimed—"Oh, why did not he die forty years ago, while he knew in whom he had believed!"¶

As an apology for these lengthened remarks respecting John Whitelamb, the reader is reminded that this able man married one of Mr Wesley's daughters, and, for four years, acted as his amanuensis in transcribing his "Dissertations on the Book of Job."

Mr Wesley's Dissertations are fifty-three in number, (Dr Adam Clarke, in mistake, says thirty-five,) and many of them, besides

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1778, p. 185.

† *Ibid*, 1845, p. 151.

‡ Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

§ *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 151.

|| Stonehouse's *History of the Isle of Axholme*.

¶ Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

being immensely learned, are in a high degree interesting and curious. The following is a list of them :—

1. Whether the Book of Job be a true history or a poetic parable ?
2. The Author of the Book.
3. The Dramatic Construction of the Book.
4. The Pastoral Songs, &c., in the Sacred Scriptures.
5. The Elegance and Rhetoric of the Book of Job.
6. Parallels from Homer.
7. The Name, or Names of Job.
8. The Posterity of Joktan.
9. The Posterity of Chanaan.
10. The Phœnician Shepherds.
11. The Nations Overthrown by Chedorlaomer.
12. The Children of Abraham by Hagar.
13. The Five Cities of the Plain.
14. Allusions in the Book of Job to the Fall of Angels and of Man ; to the Antediluvians and the Flood ; to the Precepts of Noah and the Sabbath ; to the Destruction of Sodom, &c.
15. The History of Edom.
16. The Red Sea.
17. The Gulf of Persia.
18. Arabia Petræa.
19. The Desert of Arabia.
20. Arabia Felix.
21. The Magi who visited Christ.
22. On Chamo, Cush, and their Posterity.
23. Idumea.
24. The Four Quarters of the Globe.
25. The Children of Job.
26. The Wife of Job.
27. The Friends of Job.
28. The Enemies of Job.
29. The Country of Job.
30. The Time of Job.
31. Job's Knowledge of the Military Art.
32. Job's Jurisprudence.
33. Metals, Trees, Herbs, &c.
34. Gems.
35. Calamities of Job not recited in the Prologue of the Book.

36. Constellations and Meteors.
37. Phœnicia.
38. Behemoth and Leviathan.
39. The Origin of Evil.
40. On Idolatry.
41. Sabians and Sabianism.
42. Zoroasterianism.
43. Poetical Description of Animals.
44. Serpent-worship.
45. Hades.
46. The Magi of the Ancients.
47. Balaam.
48. Parallels from the Sacred Scriptures—the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Saxons.
49. The Mode of Writing among the Ancients.
50. Death and the Resurrection.
51. The Recent Mode of Interpreting Scripture.
52. The Faith of Job and Elihu.
53. Additions of the Septuagint to the end of Job.

Unhappily the whole of these Dissertations are written in Latin, and, therefore, are never likely to be read except by the lettered few. Who will undertake to furnish a correct translation of some of them for a periodical like the *Methodist Magazine*?

After the Dissertations, there are nearly two hundred pages occupied with the Hebrew text of the Book of Job, collated with the Chaldee Paraphrase, and with the Septuagint in its best editions; and also with the Syriac and Arabic versions; likewise with the Latin versions of Castellio, Montanus, St. Ambrose, Junius Tremellius, Piscator, and of the Zurich divines, together with the English version of Tindal, and the present authorised version. Every verse of the whole book of Job was collated in all the versions above-mentioned, and all the variations set down. This must have been an immense labour. Dr Adam Clarke says—"It is one of the most complete things of the kind I have ever met with, and must be invaluable to any man who may wish to read the book of Job critically."

The frontispiece of Mr Wesley's large folio is a portrait of himself in the character of Job. He is represented as without beard, and without whiskers; as wearing a small cap; as clothed in a long, loose-flowing robe; and as sitting in an antique chair with a

sceptre in his hand, two pyramids being placed behind him, and above him the arch and portcullis of an ancient gate.

The book is also illustrated with a most hideous picture of the five cities of the plain, probably designed and executed by the untutored hand of John Whitelamb; two maps of the region of the Red Sea; another plate, pretending to represent the tombs of Rachel, Dionysius, the Maccabees, Semiramis, and Herod the Great; two maps of Arabia; a map of Maundell's Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem; an illustration of the Borealis; together with large-sized engravings of the hippopotamus, the crocodile, and the horse.

In reference to the horse, the following anecdote is worth preserving. It appears that Lord Oxford had in his possession, what was supposed to be, the finest Arab horse in existence. His Lordship had already shown great kindness to Mr Wesley's son Samuel at Westminster, and, thus encouraged, the rector wrote, saying he was wishful to illustrate his Dissertations by an engraving of the Arab horse, and that he had been told that his lordship's "Bloody Arab" was the finest animal of that breed that existed. He adds:—"I have an ambition to get him drawn by the best artist we can find, and place him as the greatest ornament of my work. If your lordship has a picture of him I would beg that my engraver may take a draft from it, or, if not, that my son may have the liberty to get one drawn from life."*

Samuel Wesley, jun., shared the intimate friendship of this distinguished statesman, and was a frequent guest at his lordship's house; and there can be little doubt that, through him, the father's request was granted, especially remembering that Lord Oxford was not only a great encourager of literature, but the greatest collector, in his time, of curious books and manuscripts, and that he it was who formed the nucleus of the celebrated Harleian library, now one of the richest treasures of the British Museum.

Prefixed to Mr Wesley's Dissertations is a list of subscribers' names, numbering more than three hundred, and including thirty-

* The rector of Epworth was under considerable obligations to Lord Oxford, as appears from the dedication of his son Samuel's poems to that nobleman. He writes:—"Neither obscurity of condition, nor distance of place, could prevent your lordship from distinguishing and encouraging a worthy clergyman, my father, in his indefatigable researches after truth, and his unfashionable studies in divinity; which, perhaps, might have been left unfinished without that encouragement."—*Poems on Several Occasions*, by S. WESLEY, London, 1736.

one nobles, fifteen bishops, and twenty-two deans and other dignitaries of the Church. The following are some of the distinguished names in this illustrious list, given alphabetically:—Earl of Ashburnham, Bishop Atterbury, Lord Bathurst, Lord Bolingbroke, Duke of Buckinghamshire, Earl of Burlington, Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop of London, Earl of Malton, Earl of Orrery, Earl of Oxford, Alexander Pope, Earl of Portmore, Sir Hans Sloane, Dean Swift, Lord Tyrconnel, Dr Waterland, Samuel, John, Charles, and Matthew Wesley, and William Whiston. Such names are a strong intimation of Mr Wesley's high repute as a literary man.

The proposals for publishing the Dissertations were circulated in 1729, but the book was not ready for the market until about the year 1736, that being the date of a copy now before us. The work was dedicated by permission to Queen Caroline, to whom it was presented by John Wesley, two days before he set sail for Georgia. He says, her Majesty received it with "many good words and smiles."* Dr Clarke relates that, when Wesley was introduced into the royal presence, the Queen was romping with her maids of honour; but she suspended her play, took the book from his hand, and said, "It is very prettily bound," and then laid it down without opening it. He rose up, bowed, walked backward, and withdrew. The Queen bowed and smiled, and immediately resumed her sport.†

Samuel Badcock, whose friendship for the Wesley family was dubious, says, Mr Wesley's Dissertations were "never held in any estimation by the learned." John Wesley replied, "I doubt that. The book certainly contains immense learning, but of a kind which I do not admire."‡

Bishop Warburton, of whom Dr Johnson says, "his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact," writing to Bishop Hurd, remarks: "Poor Job! It was his eternal fate to be persecuted by his friends. His three comforters passed sentence of condemnation upon him, and he has been executing *in effigie* ever since. He was first bound to the stake by a long *Catena* of Greek fathers; then tortured by Pineda; then strangled by Caryll; and afterwards cut up by Wesley, and anatomised by Garnet. He was ordained, I think, by a fate like that of Prometheus, to

* Priestley's *Original Letters*, p. 56.

† Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

‡ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p. 246.

lie still upon his dunghill, and have his brains sucked out by owls."*

As a set-off to Warburton's slap-dash wit, we give a letter which Alexander Pope addressed to Dean Swift in the year 1730 :—"This is a letter extraordinary, to do and say nothing but recommend to you a pious and good work, and for a good and honest man ; moreover, he is about seventy, and poor, which you might think included in the word 'honest.' I shall think it a kindness done to myself, if you can propagate Mr Wesley's subscription for his Commentary on Job among your divines, (bishops excepted, of whom there is no hope,) and among such as are believers, or readers of Scripture. Even the curious may find something to please them, if they scorn to be edified. It has been the labour of eight years† of this learned man's life. I call him what he is—a learned man ; and I engage you will approve his prose more than you formerly could his poetry. Lord Bolingbroke is a favourer of it, and allows you to do your best to serve an old Tory and a sufferer for the Church of England, though you are a Whig, as I am."‡

Lord Oxford wrote to Swift in the same year, requesting the same favour, and says : "The person concerned is a worthy, honest man ; and by this work of his he is in hopes to get free of a load of debt which has hung upon him for some years. This debt of his is not owing to any folly or extravagance, but to the calamity of his house having been twice burned, which he was obliged to rebuild ; and having but small preferment in the Church, and a large family of children, he has not been able to extricate himself out of the difficulties these accidents have brought upon him. Three sons he has bred up well at Westminster, and they are excellent scholars. The eldest has been one of the ushers in Westminster School since the year 1714. He is a man in years, yet hearty and able to study many hours in a day. This, in short, is the case of an honest, poor, worthy clergyman ; and I hope you will take him under your protection. I cannot pretend that my recommendation should have any weight with you, but as it is joined to and under the wing of Mr Pope."

We have now passed in review the whole of Mr Wesley's literary productions, excepting one. This was "A Letter to a

* Nicholl's *Literary Anecdotes*. † In reality, it was much more than this.

‡ Nicholl's *Literary Anecdotes*.

Curate," originally written for the use of the brother of the Rev. Mr Hoole of Haxey, who was about to be ordained, and to become Samuel Wesley's curate at Epworth. A year or two after, the manuscript was sent to John Wesley, who published it shortly after his father's death, and says, in his preface, that the reader will "find strong sense and deep experience, in plain, clear, and unaffected words, and a strain of piety running through the whole, worthy a soldier of Jesus Christ." This considerably-sized pamphlet is now extremely scarce, but the reader may find a reprint of it in an Appendix to Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," vol. ii. p. 500. As the pamphlet throws great light upon Mr Wesley's character, displays his immense reading, mentions the leading men of his times with whom he was personally acquainted, and makes several statements respecting his own proceedings as a parish priest, we take the liberty of giving a lengthened outline of its valuable contents.*

The points upon upon which Mr Wesley gives advice to his young curate are—1. His general aims and intentions; 2. His converse and demeanour among the parishioners; 3. His reading the liturgy; 4. His studies; 5. His preaching and catechising. 6. His administering the sacraments. 7. The administration of discipline.

In reference to the first, he avers that the end to be aimed at by every Christian minister is "the glory of God, the edifying of His Church, and the salvation of immortal souls." The man who makes the attainment of worldly dignity any part of his design, falls not far short of the iniquity of Simon Magus, nor can he

* The editor of Dr Clarke's *Wesley Family* has thrown out the hint that it is not improbable that the "Clergyman's Vade Mecum" was written by Samuel Wesley; but I can find no evidence of this. The third edition of this work, published, in 2 vols., in 1709, is now before me. The full title of the first volume is, "The Clergyman's Vade Mecum; or, an Account of the Ancient and Present Church of England; the Duties and Rights of the Clergy, and of their Privileges and Hardships; containing full Directions relating to Ordination, Institution, Induction, and most of the Difficulties which they commonly meet with in the Discharge of their Office." The title of the second volume is, "The Clergyman's Vade Mecum, Part II.; containing the Canonical Codes of the Primitive, Universal, Eastern, and Western Church, down to the year of our Lord 787. Done from the Original Greek and Latin; omitting no Canon, Decree, or any part of them that is curious or instructive. With explanatory Notes, a large Index, and a Preface showing the usefulness of the work; with some Reflections on Moderate Nonconformity, and the Rights of the Church."

expect a much better end. Without the aim being right, a clergyman's life would be one of the most tasteless and wearisome things in the world. "For my own part," he says, "I had rather be a porter, or even a pettifogger." To keep the heart right in this matter, he recommends his curate to read, once a quarter, the form of ordination; just as Methodist preachers, some years ago, were enjoined to read the "Liverpool Minutes."

As it regards "converse and demeanour," he strongly advises that, when parish business calls the minister to a public-house, as it sometimes may, his stay in such a place should be as brief as possible; and that when visiting, especially the rich, he should guard himself against the bottle and against bribes. He recommends him to "visit his whole parish from house to house, and that even the men and maid-servants; for a good shepherd knows his sheep by name." He advises him to take down the name and age of every person, and to ascertain who can read; who can say their prayers and catechisms; who have been confirmed; who have received the communion; who are of age to do it; and who have prayers in their families. He had attempted this twice or thrice himself during the first twelve years of his ministry at Epworth; but during the last twelve, since his house was burned, he had been so much diverted, that, though he had begun such a systematised visiting, he had not been able to quite finish it. He recommends the curate to visit the sick, even though not requested; and to endeavour to suppress the new custom of burying by candle-light.

With regard to "reading prayers,"* he expresses a confident hope that his curate will do as he has done, viz., read the prayers on every holiday, Wednesday, and Friday; and, he says, he should be pleased if this was done also on the eves of holidays. He remarks that there are but very few who read the Liturgy as it should be read; and that he has heard a hundred good preachers to one good reader. He says—"I am of opinion that the prayers, and even the lessons, might be pricked, as are the psalms and anthems, so as to be read properly and musically." He urges his

* In an article in the *Athenian Oracle*, vol. i. p. 459, on the use of extempore prayer, Samuel Wesley seems to be in favour of a medium between the use of extempore prayer and a form of prayer. This he calls "premeditated prayer;" that is, premeditated not in reference to words but things. At the same time he says—"There are very few who have command of words enough to express themselves as they ought on such an occasion, and therefore a form is the safe way."

friend to avoid "unequal cadences," and "incondite whinings; laying weight where there ought to be none, or omitting it where it is requisite, like the music of a Quakers' meeting." "He must," he adds, "avoid a running over the prayers, as if we were in haste to be at the end of them; and, on the other side, a drawling, canting manner, either of which will be apt to render the reader, if not the prayers themselves, contemptible."

Respecting psalmody, he says that, as they cannot, at Epworth, "reach anthems and cathedral music, they must be content with their present parochial way of singing." Indeed, he inclines to think they must also be content with their "grandsire Sternhold," for Bishop Beveridge had declared that the common people could understand the Psalms of Sternhold better than those of Tate and Brady. Wesley says there may be truth in this, for the common people "have a strange genius at understanding nonsense." He adds that the people at Epworth "did once sing well, and it cost a pretty deal to teach them." The singing, however, was now not so good as formerly, and he hopes his curate will tune them up again by meeting them at church in the long winter evenings, and by getting the scholars to sing as they used to do when he first came thither.

Concerning his "studies," Mr Wesley advises his curate to add to his knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages a knowledge of the Hebrew, for that is necessary in order to be a complete divine. He contends that, while logic, history, law, pharmacy, philosophy, chronology, geography, mathematics, poetry, music, and other parts of learning, are to be read and studied, they must all be used as auxiliaries to divinity. The Bible, however, must be the main subject of a clergyman's studies, and this ought always to be read with devotion. The Apocryphal Books ought not to be neglected, being of great and venerable antiquity, and some of them referred to by St Paul, and perhaps also by our Saviour. Mr Wesley then proceeds to enumerate a host of writers whose works are worthy of being read or otherwise. Tertullian had fire enough, and Justin and Clemens Alexandrinus sense and learning; but Origen is worth them and all others put together. Irenæus is learned, acute, orthodox, zealous, and devout; and St Cyprian is safer than his master Tertullian; but Lactantius, notwithstanding the purity of his language and the beauty of his periods, is so novel a Christian, or so rank an heretic, that he scarce had patience

to read him. Socrates and Plato are almost transcripts of Pythagoras. Tully is worth all the Romans. Seneca is well worth reading. And thus Samuel Wesley runs through all the principal writers, Christian and heathen, from the birth of Christ to the time of the Reformation. He had not read much of Luther; Melancthon was ingenious and polite; Calvin worthy of being read with caution. Bucer was pious, learned, and moderate; Bellarmine had all the strength of the Romanists; Fisher was a great man; Gardiner was far from being contemptible; Erasmus useful and pleasant; Jewel neat and strong; Cranmer pious and erudite; but Ridley, among all the Reformers, for clearness, closeness, strength, and learning, stands pre-eminent. Chillingworth was one of the best disputants in the world; Grotius was the prince of commentators, and worth all the rest, though he seems not always consistent with himself; Hammond was learned, judicious, and orthodox, if you throw aside his Jerusalem, and Gnostics, and Simon Magus; Sanderson was a master casuist; Mede has many bright and happy thoughts; the critics were worth a king's ransom, and most of them might be found in Pool's Synopsis.

Speaking of his own contemporaries, Wesley proceeds to say:—Tillotson brought the art of preaching near perfection, but Stillfleet was a more universal scholar; and yet Archbishop Sharpe was a more popular pulpit orator than either. Bishop Pearson was a man of almost inimitable sense, piety, and learning, and his work on the creed ought to be in every clergyman's study, though unable to purchase anything else than the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Bishop Bull was a strong and nervous writer; and the sermons of Bishop Beveridge were in themselves a library. Bishop Spratt was one of the first masters of the English language. Bishop Burnet, notwithstanding his Scotticisms, had a prodigious genius, and a body that would bear almost anything, for he himself had told Wesley that, at one period of his life, his circumstances were such that, to retrieve them, he lived upon three-halfpence a day. Bishop Ken made almost all who heard him preach begin to weep; Bishop Hopkins was judicious and useful; Isaac Barrow strong, masculine, and noble; Dodwell had piety and learning, but was overfond of nostrums; Ray, Derham, and Boyle were as useful as entertaining; Calamy's, Smalridge's, and Atterbury's sermons were standards; Whitby was learned and laborious, though he had brought his squirt to quench hell-fire,

and to diminish the honour of his Lord and Master ; and Le Clerc had more wit than learning, and less faith than either. Judge Hale was strong, pious, and nervous ; Nelson genteel, zealous, and instructive ; Leslie, against the Jews and Deists, was demonstrative ; Kettlewell, wonderfully pious and devout ; and Hickes's Letters against the Papists unanswerable. Among his old friends, the Dissenters, Mr Wesley mentions Richard Baxter, whom he had heard preach, and whose practical writings, as well as sermons, had a strange fire and pathos ; Dr Annesley, a man of great piety and of very good learning ; Charnock, diffuse and lax, but very good ; Howe, close, strong, and metaphysical ; Alsop, merry and witty ; Bates, polite and polished ; Williams, orthodox and possessed of good sense, especially that of getting money ; Calamy, whose style is not amiss ; Bradbury, who is fire and feather ; Burgess, who had more sense than he made use of ; Shower, polite ; Cruso, unhappy ; Owen, a gentleman and a scholar ; Matthew Henry, commended for his laborious work on the Old Testament ; and Clarkson, Tillotson's tutor, who knew more about the Fathers than all the Dissenters put together.

After going through this long list of authors, with whose writings he was himself more or less acquainted, Mr Wesley takes up the fifth section of his pamphlet—viz., Preaching ; and says here “ he ought to blush for pretending to give rules for that wherein he was never master, but it is far easier to direct than it is to practise.” First, he advises his curate to prepare a course of sermons on all the principles of religion, so as to comprise, as near as may be, the whole body of divinity. He then proceeds to say —“ I sincerely hate what some call a fine sermon, with just nothing in it. I cannot for my life help thinking that it is very like our fashionable poetry—a mere polite nothing.” He recommends that the divisions of a sermon be not too long, or too many ; that its illustrations be proper and lively, its proofs close and pointed, its motives strong and cogent, and its inferences and application natural, and yet laboured with all the force of sacred eloquence. He also recommends a prudent, occasional mixture of controversial sermons against papists, sectaries, and heretics ; and that the curate, instead of reading his sermons, should repeat them from memory. He advises him to preach suitable sermons in every year, on November 5th, January 30th, May 29th, and August 1st.

In reference to "Catechising," he says, the curate will have assistance from the pious and careful schoolmaster, in whose house he will live. He thinks that catechising had much to do with the speedy and wide propagation of the Reformed religion, and has little hope that the Church of England will maintain its position if this be neglected. He expresses the opinion that catechising should not be confined to the season of Lent only, but should be practised at evening service on all Sundays and holidays; and that when the children have been made perfect in the ordinary church catechism, they should be taught some larger one. He himself had adopted this plan, using, as his second catechism, that published by Bishop Beveridge.

As to the administration of the Sacraments, he hopes that the curate will succeed in doing what he had never been able to do himself—viz., getting the godfathers and godmothers at baptisms to repeat the responses. The greatest struggle of his ministerial life at Epworth, had been to prevail with the people to bring their children to church for public baptism, and their wives to be churched. In many instances, parents deferred the baptism of their children so long that they brought such monsters of men-children to the font as were almost enough to break his arms while holding them, and whose manful voices were enough to disturb and alarm the whole congregation. This was an evil which ought to be set right. The Lord's Supper was administered in Epworth Church once a month, and a collection made, at which Mr Wesley, for the sake of example, always gave something himself. This sacrament money, when entered in the church book, was kept in the box appointed for it, with three canonical locks and keys, one of the keys being held by the rector; three-fourths of the money were paid for the children at the charity school, and the remainder put into the bank for such poor sick people as had no constant relief from the parish, and who came to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The enforcement of Discipline was not the least difficult task. He requests that the curate will direct the churchwardens to enforce the ninetieth canon, and diligently see that all the parishioners resort to church, and not stay idling in the churchyard or porch; and that he keep the churchwardens themselves from the alehouse during divine service. He states that he had always brought to public penance anti-nuptial and no-nuptial fornicators.

He advises that there be no disputations with Dissenters, for when he first came to Epworth he had practised this, but his opponents always outfaced and outlunged him, and, at the end, they were just where they were at the beginning.

Mr Wesley then concludes by saying, that he had spent some weeks in writing "this tedious and most unfashionable letter;" and adds, "Go on in the way of duty. I hope there will be no dispute between us, but who shall run fastest and fairest; and if I am distanced, I will limp after you as fast as I can with such a weight."

Such are the salient points and facts in Mr Wesley's letter to a young clergyman. John Wesley acted upon some of its advices in Georgia with respect to visiting and catechising, and strongly urged the same upon his first itinerants; and George Whitefield acknowledged, in 1737, that the letter had been of service to himself.*

Thus did Mr Wesley labour to benefit the church and to bless mankind. Meanwhile, as usual, he was struggling with embarrassments, and with no ordinary trials. Mrs Wesley, in 1721, states that she was rarely in health, and Mr Wesley began to suffer from the infirmities of age. Emily had been compelled to become a teacher in a boarding-school; Sukey had been married to a man little better than a fiend; other children were at home, wanting neither industry nor capacity for business; but the parents could do nothing for them. The eldest daughter was absent, the second ruined, and all the rest in great distress. The parsonage was not half furnished, nor the family half clothed, but amid all, the venerable man was patient, and his wife loving. "Did I not know," she writes, "that Almighty wisdom hath views and ends in fixing the bounds of our habitation, which are out of our ken, I should think it a thousand pities that a man of his brightness, and rare endowments of learning and useful knowledge, in relation to the Church of God, should be confined to an obscure corner of the country, where his talents are buried, and he determined to a way of life for which he is not so well qualified as I could wish."

In the midst of all this, he obtained, in 1726, the small rectory of Wroot, about five miles from Epworth, and here he sometimes resided, but this added but little to his domestic comforts, as the

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1798, p. 35.

profits barely covered the expenses of serving it.* Even as late as 1821, the number of houses in the parish were not more than fifty-four, and contained a population of only two hundred and eighty-five.† The church, in the days of Wesley, was a small brick building, having, however, some ancient sepulchral monuments.‡ The parsonage-house was covered with a roof of thatch, the country round about was little better than a swamp, and the inhabitants are thus described by the gifted pen of Mehetabel Wesley in lines addressed to her sister Emilia :—

“ Fortune has fixed thee in a place
Debarred of wisdom, wit, and grace—
High births and virtue equally they scorn,
As asses dull, on dunghills born ;
Impervious as the stones, their heads are found ;
Their rage and hatred steadfast as the ground.
With these unpolished wights, thy youthful days
Glide slow and dull, and Nature's lamp decays :
Oh what a lamp is hid, 'midst such a sordid race ! ” §

Mr Wesley wished his son, John, to become his curate at Wroot, and, for a time, he officiated in that capacity ; but, in 1729, he was obliged to relinquish his duties there, in order to fulfil the office of Moderator of Lincoln College, Oxford. ||

* Mr Kirk says the living of Wroot is now worth £400 a year with residence.

† Stonehouse's *History of Axholme*. ‡ *Ibid*.

§ Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

|| Moore's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 149.

CHAPTER XIX.

LETTERS—1725-1735.

IT has often been said that, generally speaking, there is nothing which develops a man's character so much as his own private letters to his friends. Hitherto we have made sparing use of Mr Wesley's correspondence, and hence, that the reader may have an opportunity, by means of such a test, to form his own opinion respecting this venerable man, we devote this chapter entirely to his "letters." All the letters inserted here were written within the last eleven years of his eventful life,—many of them have been previously published ; but, with respect to others, this is the first time that they have been submitted to the public eye. A few notes may be useful ; but, with this exception, the chapter will consist entirely of letters. The chapter is long, but the writer flatters himself that the reader will thank him for it.

TO HIS SON JOHN.

"WROOT, Jan. 26, 1724-5.

"DEAR SON,—I am so well pleased with your decent behaviour, or, at least, with your letters, that I hope I shall have no occasion to remember some things that are past. Since you have now, for some time, bit upon the bridle, I will take care hereafter to put a little honey upon it as oft as I am able ; but then it shall be of my own mere motion, as the last £5 was ; for I will bear no rival in my kingdom.

"I did not forget you, neither Dr M. ;* but have moved that

* Probably Dr Morley, Rector of Lincoln College. John Wesley, at this time, was embarrassed for want of money. Three weeks before, his father had sent him £5, and had promised further kindness. (MS. letter ; see also Wesley's *Works*, vol. xii. p. 16.)

way as much as possible ; though, I must confess, hitherto with no great prospect of success.

“As to what you mention of entering into holy orders,* it is indeed a great work. I am pleased to find you think it so—as well that you don’t admire a callow clergyman any more than I do. As to the motives you take notice of, it is no harm to desire getting into that office, even with Eli’s sons, ‘to get a piece of bread ;’ for ‘the labourer is worthy of his hire ;’ though a desire and intention to lead a stricter life, and a belief one should do so, is a better reason. But this should by all means be begun before, or else, ten to one, it will deceive us afterwards. If a man be unwilling and undesirous to enter into orders, it is easy to guess whether he can say, with common honesty, that he believes he is moved by the Holy Spirit to do it. But the principal spring and motive, to which all the former should be secondary, must certainly be the glory of God, the service of His Church, with the edification of our neighbour ; and woe to him who, with any meaner leading view, attempts so sacred a work ; for which he should take all the care he possibly can, with the advice of wiser and elder men, especially imploring, with all humility, sincerity, and intention of mind, with fasting and prayer, the direction and assistance of Almighty God and His Holy Spirit, to qualify and prepare himself for it.

“The knowledge of the languages is a considerable help in this matter, which, I thank God, all my three sons have, to a very laudable degree ; though God knows, I had never more than a smattering of them. But then, this must be prosecuted to the thorough understanding the original text of the sacred Scriptures by intent and long conversing with them.

“You ask me which is the best commentary on the Bible ? The several paraphrases and translations of it, in the Polyglott, compared with the original, and with one another, are, in my opinion, to an honest, devout, industrious, humble mind, infinitely preferable to any commentary I ever saw written upon it ; though Grotius is the best, (for the most part,) especially on the Old Testament. Compare the Hebrew Bible, the Vulgate, and the Samaritan in the Polyglott, in the morning. In the afternoons, which you will ; but be sure to walk an hour, if fair, in the fields. Get Thirleby’s “Chrysostom de Sacerdotio.” Master it ; digest it. Some ad-

* John Wesley was now thinking of entering into deacon’s orders. He was ordained deacon in the month of September following.

vices I drew up for Mr Hoole, my curate, may not be unuseful to you. Pray let no one but yourself see them.

"By all this you see I am not for your going over-hastily into orders. When I am for your taking them, you shall know; and it is not impossible but I may then be with you, if God so long spare my life and health.

"I like your verses on the 85th Psalm. I would not have you bury your talent. All are well. Work and write while you can. You see Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is but a little behind him. My eyes and heart are now almost all I have left; and I bless God for them.—Your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY." *

A month after the above was written, Susannah Wesley addressed her son on the same subject. The following is an extract :—

"February 23, 1725.

"DEAR JACKY,—I was much pleased with your letter to your father about taking orders, and like the proposal well; but it is an unhappiness almost peculiar to our family, that your father and I seldom think alike. I approve the disposition of your mind, and think the sooner you are a deacon the better; because it may be an inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity, which I humbly conceive is the best study for candidates for orders. Mr Wesley differs from me, and would engage you, I believe, in critical learning, which, though accidentally of use, is in nowise preferable to the other. I earnestly pray God to avert that greater evil from you of engaging in trifling studies, to the neglect of such as are absolutely necessary. I dare advise nothing. God Almighty direct and bless you! Adieu!"†

Mrs Wesley seems to have influenced her husband, and to have induced him to change his mind. Hence the following unpublished letter, written within three weeks after the foregoing :—

* This letter is copied from a manuscript copy of the original, in the handwriting of John Wesley. Part of it was published in the *Arminian Magazine*, for 1778, p. 29; and also in Coke and Moore's *Life of Wesley*, p. 47; but the reader will perceive, that, in the letter as now given, there are several interesting facts and statements, omitted in both the works just mentioned.

† The letter from which this is taken, I believe, has never been published.

"WROOT, *March 13, 1724-5.*

"DEAR SON,—I have both yours ; and have changed my mind since my last. I now incline to your going this summer into orders, and would have you turn your thoughts and studies that way. But, in the first place, if you love yourself, or me, pray heartily. I will struggle hard, but I will get money for your orders, and something more. Mr Downes has spoken to Dr Morley about you, who says he will inquire of your character.

" 'Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed.'

" This with blessing, from your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."

A visit to Wroot by Samuel Wesley, jun., led to a short postponement of John's ordination. The following letter, hitherto unpublished, refers to this :—

"WROOT, *May 10, 1725.*

"DEAR SON,—Your brother Samuel, with his wife and child, are here. I did what I could that you might have been in orders this Trinity ; but I doubt your brother's journey hither has, for the present, disconcerted our plans ; though you will have more time to prepare yourself for ordination, which I pray God you may, as I am, your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."

Part of the following letter was printed in the first volume of the *Arminian Magazine*, p. 30, but, in the original manuscript, all allusions to John Wesley's position and prospects are omitted. The subjoined is an exact and full copy :—

"WROOT, *July 14, 1725.*

"DEAR SON,—It is not for want of affection that I am some letters in your debt ; but because I could not yet answer them, so as to satisfy myself or you ; though I hope still to do it in a few weeks.

"As for Thomas à Kempis, all the world are apt to strain for one or the other. And it is no wonder if contemplative men, especially when wrapt in a cowl, and the darkness of the sceptical divinity, and near akin, if I mistake not, to the obscure ages, when they observed the bulk of the world so mad for sensual pleasures, should run into the contrary extreme, and attempt to

persuade us to have no senses at all, or that God made them to very little purpose. But for all that, mortification is still an indispensable Christian duty. The world is a syren, and we must have a care of her. And if the young man will 'rejoice in his youth,' yet it would not be amiss for him to take care that his joys be moderate and innocent; and, in order to this, sadly to remember 'that for all these things God will bring him to judgment.' I have only this to add of my friend and old companion, that, making a pretty man grains of allowance, he may be read to great advantage, and that, notwithstanding all his superstition and enthusiasm, it is almost impossible to peruse him seriously, without admiring, and, I think, in some measure imitating his heroic strains of humility, and piety, and devotion. But I reckon, you have before this received your mother's, who has leisure to write, and can do so without pain, which I cannot.

"I will write to the Bishop of Lincoln again. You shall not want a black coat as soon as I have any *white*.

"You may transcribe any part of my letter to Mr Hoole, but not the whole, for your own private use; neither lend it; but any friend may read it in your chamber. Master St Chrysostom, and the Articles, and the Form of Ordination. Bear up stoutly against the world, &c. Keep a good, an honest, and a pious heart. Pray hard, and watch hard; and I am persuaded your quarantine is almost at an end, and all shall be well: however, nothing shall be wanting to make it so, that is in the power of, your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."

The following unpublished letter to his son John, after referring to a painful family occurrence, goes on to say:—

"WROOT, August 2, 1725.

"I was at Gainsborough last week, to wait on Sir J. Thorold, and shall again, by God's leave, be there to-morrow, and endeavour to make way for you from that quarter.

"As to the gentlemen candidates you write of, does anybody think the devil is dead, or so much as asleep, or that he has no agents left? Surely virtue can bear being laughed at. The Captain and Master endured something more for us, before He entered into glory; and unless we track His steps, in vain do we hope to share that glory with Him. Nor shall any who sincerely endeavour

to serve Him, either in turning others to righteousness, or keeping them steadfast in it, lose their reward. Nor can you have better directions, (except Timothy and Titus,) than Chrysostom de Sacerdotio, and the Form of Ordination. And God forbid that I should ever cease to pray for you!—Your loving father,

“SAMUEL WESLEY.”

The following to his son John was accompanied with a certificate of birth and baptism:—

“WROOT, *August 21, 1725.*

“DEAR SON,—Thanks be to God! we are all well. I send the certificate on the other side, and will be soon with Mr Downes at Dr Morley’s. You need not show the other side, unless it is asked for. Say you are in the 23d current.—Your loving father,

“SAMUEL WESLEY.”

The next letter also has never yet been published. Both Samuel Wesley and his son John, at this time, were in great distress for want of money.

“BAWTRY, *Sept. 1, 1725.*

“DEAR SON,—I came hither to-day, because I cannot be at rest, till I make you easier. I could not possibly manufacture any money for you here, sooner than next Saturday. On Monday I design to wait on Dr Morley, and will try to prevail with your brother to return you £8, with interest. I will assist you in the charges for ordination, though I am myself just now struggling for life. This £8 you may depend on the next week, or the week after.

“I like your way of thinking and arguing; and yet must say, I am a little afraid on it. He that believes and yet argues against reason, is half a Papist, or enthusiast. He that would make Revelation bend to his own shallow reason is either half a Deist or a heretic. O my dear! steer clear between this Scylla and Charybdis. God will bless you; and you shall ever be beloved, as you will ever be a comfort to, your affectionate father,

“SAMUEL WESLEY.”

“P.S.—If you have any scruples about any part of Revelation, or the Articles of the Church of England, which I think exactly agreeable to it, I can answer them.”

collate it exactly with the Vulgate, writing all, even the least, variations or differences between them.

"Second, To these I would have you add the Samaritan text, which is the very same with the Hebrew, except in some very few places, differing only in the Samaritan character, which I think is the true old Hebrew.

"You may learn the Samaritan alphabet in a day, either from the Prolegomena in Walton's Polyglott, or from his grammar. In a twelvemonth's time, sticking close to it in the forenoons, you will get twice through the Pentateuch; for I have done it four times the last year, and am going over it the fifth, and also collating the two Greek versions, the Alexandrian and the Vatican, with what I can get of Symmachus and Theodotian, &c. You shall not lose your reward, either in this or the other world. Nor are your brothers like to be idle; but I would have nothing said of it to anybody, though your brother Sam shall write to you shortly about it."*

What the full extent of Mr Wesley's scheme was, we are not able to learn; but probably it was the publication, on a wide basis, of a Polyglott Bible.

John Wesley was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, on the 17th of March 1726. Four days afterwards, his father wrote the following short letter:—

"WROOT, *March 21, 1726.*

"DEAR MR FELLOW ELECT OF LINCOLN,—I have done more than I could for you. On your waiting on Dr Morley with this he will pay you £12. You are inexpressibly obliged to that generous man. We are all as well as can be expected. Your loving father.

"SAMUEL WESLEY."†

It was no trifle for this venerable man to meet the moderate expenses incurred by his son John at the Oxford University. Hence the following:—

"WROOT, *April 1, 1726.*

"DEAR SON JOHN,—I had both yours since the election. In both you express yourself as becomes you for what I had willingly, though with much greater difficulty than you imagine, done for

* Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 22; also Clarke's *Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 296.

† MS. letter.

you ; for the last £12 pinched me so hard, that I am forced to beg time of your brother Sam, till after harvest, to pay him the £10 that you say he lent you. Nor shall I have so much as that, (perhaps not £5) to keep my family till after harvest ; and I do not expect that I shall be able to do anything for Charles when he goes to the University. What will be my own fate, God knows, before this summer be over. *Sed passi graviora*. Wherever I am, my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln !

“ Yet all this, and perhaps worse than you know, has not made me forget you ; for I wrote to Dr King, desiring leave for you to come one, two, or three months into the country, where you should be gladly welcome.

“ As for advice, keep your best friend fast ; and, next to him, Dr Morley ; and have a care of your other friends, especially the younger. All at present from your loving father,

“ SAMUEL WESLEY.”

Sixteen days after this Mr Wesley wrote to his son again, as follows :—

“ April 17, 1726.

“ DEAR SON,—I hope Sander will be with you by Wednesday noon, with the horses, books, and bags, and this. I got your mother to write the enclosed, (for you see I can hardly scrawl,*) because it was possible it might come to hand on Tuesday ; but my head was so full of cares that I forgot on Saturday last to put it into the post house. I should be very glad to see you, though but for a day ; but much more for a quarter of a year. I think you will make what haste you can. I design to be at the Crown in Bawtry on Saturday se’ennight. God bless and send you a prosperous journey to your affectionate father,

“ SAMUEL WESLEY.”†

John Wesley came to his father's a few days after the date of the above letter, and spent the summer at Epworth and at Wroot. Here he usually read prayers, and preached twice every Sabbath ; and, in various ways, assisted the venerable rector. He still pursued his studies, and had frequent opportunities of conversing with his parents, and kept a regular diary of what transpired.

* His right hand was already palsied.

† MS. letter.

He takes notice of the particular subjects discussed in their various conversations, and among others mentions the following: how to increase our faith, our hope, and our love of God; prudence, simplicity, sincerity, pride, and vanity; wit, humour, fancy, courtesy, and general usefulness. He returned to Oxford on the 21st of September; and, on the 7th of November following, was chosen Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes.*

We now proceed to lay before the reader seven letters written during the year 1727; the first, second, fourth, and seventh of which are now for the first time published.

“WROOT, *June 6, 1727.*

“SON JOHN,—I hope I may still be able to serve both my cures this summer; or, if not, die pleasantly in my last *dike*. If that should happen, I see no great difficulty in bringing your pupil down with you, say a quarter of a year, where you may both live at least as cheap as at Oxford. I shall be myself at Epworth, as soon as I can get a lodging.

“This is all to you at present from your humble father,

“SAMUEL WESLEY.”†

Charles Wesley was now at Oxford, and the following letter was written to him and his brother John unitedly:—

“BAWTRY, *June 21, 1727.*

“DEAR LADS,—This moment I received the satisfaction of yours of the 14th inst. I had no more reason to doubt your duty to me, than you have had of mine to you; although I am sure you cannot think it proper there should be two masters in a family. Read! reflect! You know I cannot but love you; if you please, and if you think it worth your while that an old father should love you.

“What should I be, if I did not take your offer to come down soon? But you could not now get from hence to Wroot; though I can make shift to get from Wroot to Epworth by boat; and it cannot be worse this summer. However, if you have any prospect of doing good to F——n ‡ (let none of my lads ever despair.) I beg you, for God’s sake, to take to him again; for how do you

* Moore’s *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 139.

† MS. letter.

‡ Probably Lewis Fenton. See Moore’s *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 149.

know, that you may thereby save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins? I heartily give you this advice, and beg of you, as you love God, or me, that you would follow it, as far as it is practicable. Once more, remember what a soul is worth, as you know what price was paid for it.

"I hope, in a fortnight, to be able to walk to Epworth. When I am tired, I will send you word. If you should come, it would be best to buy a horse; for I have now ground enough to spare for a dozen. I am weary.—From your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

The above letter refers to the difficulty of travelling in the neighbourhood of Epworth. The following, written five days later, alludes to the same matter:—

"WROOT, June 26, 1727.

"DEAR SON JOHN,—I do not think I have yet thanked you enough for your kind and dutiful letter of the 14th inst., which I received at Bawtry, last Wednesday, and answered there in a hurry; yet, on reflection, I see no reason to alter my mind much as to what I then writ; but, if you had any prospect of doing good on your pupil, I should have been pleased with your attempting it some time longer. If that is past, or hopeless, there is an end of the matter.

"When you come hither, after having taken care of Charterhouse and your own rector, your headquarters will, I believe, be for the most part at Wroot, as mine, if I can, at Epworth, though sometimes making an exchange. The truth is, I am *hipp'd* by my voyage and journey to and from Epworth last Sunday; being lamed with having my breeches too full of water, partly with a downfall from a thunder shower, and partly from the wash over the boat. Yet I thank God I was able to preach here in the afternoon, and was as well this morning as ever, except a little pain and lameness, both of which I hope to wash off with a hair of the same dog this evening.

"I wish the rain had not reached us on this side Lincoln; but we have it so continual that we have scarce one bank left, and I cannot possibly have one quarter of oats in all the levels; but, thanks be to God, the fields of barley and rye are good. We can

* MS. letter.

neither go afoot nor on horseback to Epworth, but only by boat as far as Scawsit Bridge, and then walk over the common, though I hope it will soon be better. I would gladly send horses, but don't think I have now any that would perform the journey; for—

1. My filly has scarcely recovered from the last, and I question if she ever will. However, I have turned her up to the waggon, and very seldom ride her.
2. Mettle is almost blind.
3. Your favourite two-eyed nag they have taken to swing in the back, and he is never like to be good for riding any more.
4. And Bounce and your mother's nag, you know.

Therefore, if you can get a pretty strong horse, not over fine, nor old, nor fat, I think it would improve, especially in summer, and be worth your while. I would send as far as Nottingham to meet you, but would have your studies as little intermitted as possible, and hope I shall do a month or two longer, as I am sure I ought to do all I can both for God's family and my own; and when I find it sinks me, or perhaps a little before, I will certainly send you word, with about a fortnight's notice; and in the meantime send you my blessing, as being your loving father,

SAMUEL WESLEY.*

"P.S.—Dear Charles, were I you, it should go hard but I'd get one of the Blenheim prizes. Thomas calls. Good night to you."

Nine days after, Mr Wesley wrote again to his two sons at Oxford. The Rev. Elijah Hoole, D.D., has kindly favoured me with a copy of the letter, which has never been published until now:—

"WROOT, July 5, 1727.

"DEAR CHILDREN,—The reason why I was willing to delay my son John's coming was his pupil; but that is over. Another reason was that I knew he could not get between Wroot and Epworth without hazarding his health or life; whereas my hide is tough, and I think no carrion can kill me. I walked sixteen miles yesterday, and this morning, I thank God, I was not a penny worse. The occasion of this booted walk was to hire a room for myself at Epworth, which I think I have now achieved."

(After this follows his proposal that Charles should come to Lincolnshire by the carrier. He then proceeds:—)

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

"You will find your mother much altered. I believe what will kill a cat has almost killed her. I have observed of late little convulsions in her very frequently, which I don't like.

"God bless and guide, and send you both a speedy and happy meeting with, your loving father,
SAMUEL WESLEY."

The next two letters were written on the same day, within a fortnight after the former one. The first refers to Mrs Wesley's illness:—

"WROOT, *July 18, 1727.*

"DEAR SON JOHN,—We received last post your compliments of condolence and congratulation to your mother on the supposition of her near approaching demise; to which your sister Patty will by no means subscribe, for she says she is not so good a philosopher as you are, and that she cannot spare her mother yet, if it please God, without great inconvenience.

"And indeed, though she has now and then some very sick fits, yet I hope the sight of you will revive her. However, when you come you will see a new face of things, my family being now pretty well colonised, and all perfect harmony; much happier, in no small straits, than perhaps we ever were before in our greatest affluence; and you will find a servant that will make us rich, if God gives us anything to work upon. I know not but that it may be this prospect, together with my easiness in my family which keeps my spirits from sinking, though they tell me I have lost some of my tallow between Wroot and Epworth; but that I don't value, as long as I have strength left to perform my office.

"If Charles can get to London, I believe Hardsley, at the Red Lion, Aldersgate Street, might procure him a horse as reasonably as any to ride along with you to Lincoln. He will also direct him where to leave it there for the carrier to return. This will be the cheapest and the safest way; and I will warrant you will find means to bring Charles up again. Your own best way, as in my last, will be to buy a horse for yourself for the reasons I then told you. I am weary, but your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

"WROOT, *July 18, 1727.*

"DEAR CHARLES,—I told you the Chaldee would be easy

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

(Scaliger says the Ethiopic is but a dialect of it,) so will the Syriac, and even the Arabic, as soon as you can crack it, and I believe pleasanter as well as richer than all the rest. And I doubt not but he that is master of the Hebrew may soon conquer all the others, which will both receive it and give light to each other, especially, (as I have heard,) the Arabic, whereof I question whether it be ever exhaustible, and which is yet spoken and writ from the hills of Grenada to the uttermost easterly bounds of the world. I have a sample of it for you here, if you are not got so far, in a specimen of the Arabic Testament, and have picked out a pretty many words in Job, which the commentators say are of one of those three languages, wherein your assistance will do me a great pleasure. If you can, get the Oxford edition of Tacitus's Annals, transcribing the passage in the sixth book concerning the Phoenix, and the annotations upon it, and be so kind as to bring them with you.

"I have writ, on the other side, to your brother my thoughts of the best way of your coming; and the sooner you come the better; but you will send word by post the day we must send for you to Lincoln. I heartily wish I could as well send you both a viaticum as I do my best blessings.—From your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY." *

Eight days after, Mr Wesley wrote to his son, John, stating his intention to meet him at Lincoln. The letter is now for the first time published, the copy being kindly furnished by Dr Hoole:—

"July 26, 1727.

"SON JOHN,—I shall be at Lincoln, (*D.V.*), on the — inst., and shall stay till Friday morning. If you can get thither by Wednesday or Thursday night, I shall be glad of your company home. And not long after, I hope to send Charles a *totable* reason for following. Whenever you come, you will be fully welcome to your loving father,

SAMUEL WESLEY."

John Wesley came to Epworth and Wroot accordingly. Here he continued to act as his father's curate till July 1728, when he returned to Oxford, with a view to obtain priest's orders. Two months afterwards, on September 22, he was ordained priest by

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

Dr Potter, who had ordained him deacon in 1725. He immediately returned to the assistance of his father in Lincolnshire, where, excepting a short interval, he continued until November 22, 1729, when, at the request of his faithful friend, Dr Morley, the rector of his college, he returned to Oxford to fulfil the office of moderator. Meanwhile, Charles Wesley was pursuing his studies at Christ Church College, and, though only twenty-two years old, had begun to take pupils. The following letters were written during this period. For the first we are indebted to the kindness of Dr Hoole. Hitherto it has been unpublished :—

“ EPWORTH, *Sept. 5, 1728.*

“DEAR SON,—Your mother had yours yesterday, as I suppose before this you have had hers and mine, with the certificate. Yours brought the good news of Charles’s recovery, which will supersede his country journey, and help him to regain the time he has lost in his studies.

“M—— miraculously gets money even in Wroot, and has given the first fruits of her earning to her mother, lending her money, and presenting her with a new cloak of her own buying and making, for which God will bless her. When we get to Epworth, she will grow monstrously rich, for she will have more work than she can do, and the people are monstrously civil.

“God has given me two fair escapes for life within these few weeks. The first when my old nag fell with me, trailed me by my foot in the stirrups about six yards, (when I was alone, all but God and my good angel,) trod on my other foot, yet never hurt me.

“The other escape was much greater. On Monday week, at Burringham Ferry, we were driven down with a fierce stream and wind, and fell foul with our broadside against a keel. The second shock threw two of our horses overboard, and filled the boat with water. I was just preparing to swim for life, when John White-lamb’s long legs and arms swarmed up into the keel, and lugged me in after him. My mare was swimming a quarter of an hour, but at last we all got safe to land. Help to praise Him who saves both man and beast.

“I write with pain, therefore nothing else but love and blessing from, your affectionate father,

SAMUEL WESLEY.”

“Dick’s just Dick still ; but I hope Sukey is not Sukey.”

"EPWORTH, Jan. 29, 1730.

"DEAR CHARLES,—I had your last with your brother's, and you may easily guess whether I were not pleased with it, both on your account and my own. You have a double advantage by your pupils, which will soon bring you more if you will improve it, as I firmly hope you will, in taking the utmost care to form their minds to piety as well as learning.* As for yourself, between logic, grammar, and mathematics, be idle† if you can; and I give my blessing to the bishop for having tied you a little faster, by obliging you to rub up your Arabic. A fixed and constant method will make all both easy and delightful to you. But for all that you must find time every day for walking, which you know you may do with advantage to your pupils; and a little more robust exercise, now and then, will do you no harm.

"You are now launched fairly, Charles; hold up your head, and swim like a man; and when you cuff the wave beneath you, say to it, much as another hero did—

'Carolus vehis, et Caroli fortunam.'

But always keep your eye above the pole-star. And so God send you a good voyage through the troublesome sea of life! which is the hearty prayer of, your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."†

Immediately after John Wesley's return to Oxford, in Nov. 1729, he and his brother Charles and two more students began to meet together, three or four evenings every week, for the purpose of reading the classics. One of the students was Mr Morgan, who, during the summer following, called at Oxford Gaol, to see a man condemned for the murder of his wife. He urged the two Wesleys to join him in his visits to the prison and to the poor, and, at last, on the 24th of August 1730, they yielded; but, fearful that they might be doing wrong, before they fully committed themselves to this work of visiting, they wrote asking the advice of their venerable father. Part of his answer, dated September 21, 1730, was as follows:—

"And now, as to your own designs and employments, what can

* Charles had been idle. He says, "My first year at college I lost in diversions; the next I set myself to study."—MOORE'S *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 153.

† Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

I say less of them than *valde probo* : and that I have the highest reason to bless God that He has given me two sons together at Oxford, to whom He has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them. They have but one more enemy to combat with, the flesh ; which, if they take care to subdue, by fasting and prayer, there will be no more for them to do but to proceed steadily in the same course, and expect the crown which fadeth not away. You have reason to bless God, as I do, that you have so fast a friend as Mr M.,* who, I see, in the most difficult service, is ready to break the ice for you. You do not know of how much good that poor wretch who killed his wife has been the providential occasion. I think I must adopt Mr M. to be my son, together with you and your brother Charles ; and when I have such a ternion to prosecute that war, wherein I am now *miles emeritus*, I shall not be afraid when they speak with their enemies in the gate.

"I am afraid lest the main objection you make against going on in the business with the prisoners, may secretly proceed from flesh and blood. Go on, then, in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you ! For when I was an undergraduate at Oxford, I visited those in the castle there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you.

"Your first regular step is, to consult with him (if any such there be) who has a jurisdiction over the prisoners ; and the next is, to obtain the direction and approbation of your bishop. This is Monday morning, at which time I shall never forget you. If it be possible, I should be glad to see you all three here in the fine end of summer. But if I cannot have that satisfaction, I am sure I can reach you every day, though you were in the Indies. Accordingly, to Him who is everywhere I now heartily commit you, as being your most affectionate and joyful father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."

Samuel Wesley thus gave an impulse to the first Methodist movement. In pursuance of his directions, his son John obtained the consent of the Bishop of Oxford to visit the prisoners, and

* Mr Morgan.

to preach to them once a month. These proceedings were soon known in the university, and John Wesley and his friends became a common topic of collegiate mirth, and were jeeringly designated "The Holy Club." John again consulted his father, and was answered as follows :—

"December 1, 1730.

"This day I received yours; and this evening, in the course of our reading, I thought I found an answer that would be more proper than any I myself could dictate. 'Great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful' (2 Cor. vii. 4.) What would you be? Would you be angels? I question whether a mortal can arrive to a greater degree of perfection than steadily to do good, and for that very reason patiently and meekly to suffer evil. For my part, on the present view of your actions and designs, my daily prayers are that God would keep you humble; and then, I am sure that if you continue 'to suffer for righteousness' sake,' though it be but in a lower degree, 'the Spirit of glory and of God' shall, in some good measure, 'rest upon you.' Be never weary of well-doing; never look back; for you know the prize and the crown are before you; though I can scarce think so meanly of you, as that you would be discouraged with 'the crackling of thorns under a pot.' Be not high-minded, but fear. Preserve an equal temper of mind, under whatever treatment you meet with from a not very just or well-natured world. Bear no more sail than is necessary, but steer steady. The less you value yourselves for these unfashionable duties, the more all good and wise men will value you, if they see your actions are of a piece; or, which is infinitely more, He by whom actions and intentions are weighed will both accept, esteem, and reward you.*

"I hear my son John has the honour of being styled the 'Father of the Holy Club:' if it be so, I must be the grandfather of it; and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished than to have the title of *His Holiness*." †

Who can tell the influence which such a letter had in urging John Wesley and his little band of Methodists to proceed in their new career?

Samuel Wesley, though paralysed in his right hand, was busily

* Wesley's Works, vol. i. p. 8.

† Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. i. p. 171.

engaged in completing his "Dissertation on the Book of Job." He wished to dedicate his work to Queen Caroline, and wrote to both his sons, Samuel and John, relative to the proper mode of proceeding. John, however, was now stigmatized as the "Father of the Holy Club," and Samuel had given offence in high quarters by his poetical satires on the cabinet and their friends, and hence, for the present, it was found impracticable to obtain the queen's permission. The following letter refers to this. It was addressed to Samuel :—

"EFWORTH, Dec. 17, 1730.

"DEAR SON,—Yours of the 11th inst. has made me pretty quiet in reference to my dedication, as indeed my heart was never violently set upon it, or I hope on anything else in this world. I find it stuck where I always boded it would, as in the words of your brother in yours, when you waited on him with my letter and addressed him on the occasion. 'The short answer I received was this, it was utterly impossible to obtain leave on my account; you had the misfortune to be my father; and I had a long bill against M——n.'

"I guess at the particulars, that you have let your wit too loose against some favourites; which is often more highly resented, and harder to be pardoned, than if you had done it against greater persons. It seems, then, that original sin goes sometimes upwards as well as downwards; and we must suffer for our offspring. Though, notwithstanding this disappointment, I shall never think it 'a misfortune to have been your father.' I am sensible it would avail little for me to plead, in proof of my loyalty, the having written and printed the first thing that appeared in defence of the government after the accession of King William and Queen Mary to the crown, (which was an answer to a speech without doors;) and that I wrote a great many little pieces more, both in prose and verse, with the same view; and that I ever had the most tender affection and the deepest veneration for my sovereign and the royal family; on which account (it is no secret to you, though it is to most others,) I have undergone the most sensible pains and inconveniences of my whole life, and that for a great many years together; and yet have still, I thank God, retained my integrity firm and immovable, till I have conquered at the last.

"I must confess, I had the pardonable vanity (when I had dedicated two books before to two of our English queens, Queen Mary

and Queen Anne,) to desire to inscribe a third, which has cost me ten times as much labour as all the rest, to her gracious Majesty Queen Caroline, who, I have heard, is an encourager of learning. And this work, I am sure, needs a royal encouragement, whether or no it may deserve it. Neither would I yet despair of it, had I any friend who would fairly represent that and me to her Majesty. Be that as it pleaseth Him in whose hands are the hearts of all the princes upon earth; and who turneth them whithersoever He pleases.

"If we have not subscriptions enough for the cuts, as proposed, we must be content to lower our sails again, and to have only the maps, the picture of Job, which I must have at the beginning, and some few others.

"The family, I thank God, is all well, as is your affectionate father,
SAMUEL WESLEY."*

As the following letter, likewise to his son Samuel, refers to the same Dissertations, we insert it here, though a few months out of its chronological order. Samuel Wesley, jun., had recently interred his only son:—

"June 18, 1731.

"DEAR SON,—Yes, this is a thunderbolt indeed to your whole family; but especially to me, who am not now likely to see any of my name, in the third generation, (though Job did in the fourth,) to stand before God. However, this is a new demonstration to me that there must be a hereafter. I trust God will support you both under this heavy and unspeakable affliction. But when and how did he die? and where is his epitaph? Though, if sending this now will be too much *refricare vulnus*, I will stay longer for it.

"And now for your letter of May 27. The sum is,

"1. As to the placing the Dissertations. As you say, the prolegomena are something aguish; though that and all the rest I leave (as often before) to your judgment, for my memory is near gone; neither have I the papers in any order by me.

"2. The 'Poetica Descriptio Monstri,' I think, would come in most naturally after all the Dissertations of the Behemoth and Leviathan; but you, having the whole before you, will be the most proper judge.

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

"3. Do with the 'De Carmine Pastoritio' as you please.

"4. 'Periplus Rubri Maris' comes with the geography, when Mr Hoole has finished it.

"5. I remember no extracts but that from the 'Catena,' which is 616 folio pages; but I think I have got the main of it into thirty quartos, which I finished yesterday, though there is no haste in sending it, for I design it for the appendix.

"As for the 'Testimonia Arianorum' *περί του Λογου*, it happens well that I have a pretty good copy, though not so perfect as that which is lost, and will get Mr Horberry to transcribe it as soon as he returns from Oxford; though I think it will not come in till towards the latter end of the work, as must your collation at the very end, only before the appendix;* and I shall begin to revise it to-morrow. Blessing on you and yours, from your loving father,
SAMUEL WESLEY." †

Mr Wesley was a strict disciplinarian, not only in his family, but in his parish. According to the canonical law of the Church of England, churchwardens took an oath to bring to justice all who "offended their brethren by adultery, whoredom, incest, drunkenness, swearing, ribaldry, usury, or any other uncleanness or wickedness of life," (Canon 109.) And when churchwardens violated their oaths by neglecting their duty, it then became imperative that the clergyman of the parish should present to his ordinary, the appointed judge of ecclesiastical causes, all the crimes and persons which he thought needed reformation. (Canon 113.) If the accused person was found guilty of adultery, or incontinency, the punishment usually inflicted was to do a public penance in the parish church, or in the market-place, when the offender, or offenders, stood in a white sheet, bare-legged and bare-headed, and made an open confession of their crime in a prescribed form of words. The judge, however, had authority, *after* the penance had been enjoined, to permit a commutation of it, by the criminal paying a sum of money for pious uses in satisfaction thereof. These remarks will help the reader to a better understanding of the following letters:—

* The "Testimonia Arianorum," and the Appendix, mentioned in this letter, were not published. It is evident that Samuel Wesley, jun., had the completion of the "Dissertations on the Book of Job."

† *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

“EPWORTH, Dec. 30, 1730.

“MR TERRY,—On account of our old friendship, I beg your advice as to the greatest parochial difficulty I have met with since my residence here.

“I have two couples of sinners at present upon my hands—the first very lean; the latter very fat; and I hope your courts will manage them both very well when they are blended together.

“The lean ones are Benjamin Becket, a widower, and Elizabeth Locker, a widow. Though they had not much less than half-a-score of children between them before, yet he has ventured to increase the number by getting a chopping bastard on her. She had weekly relief from the town; and he was prevented doing the same by being made sexton last year. They continue both unmarried. What aggravates his crime is, that, some years since, he did public penance here for ante-matrimonial fornication with his first wife. He and the widow are now desirous to do penance for this crime; and the fellow would undergo even a third penance by marrying her. I am desirous that their punishment should be as exemplary as their crime; and that both of them may perform their penance at three churches of the Isle;—my own at Epworth, at Haxey, and at Belton. I will see the court charges defrayed, which I hope will be as moderate as possible, because most of it is like to come out of my own pocket, and because the second couple will make amends.

“Their names are, Mr Aaron Man, one of the most substantial yeomen in my parish, reckoned worth about £100 a-year; a married man, with five grown-up children. He has long haunted a widow here of a character scarce better than his own. Her name is Sarah Brumby, with whom he has been seen both day and night, till at last she proved with child, and told several persons, who are ready to witness it, that he was the father of it. Notwithstanding this, he is so impudent and cunning that nobody doubts but he will do all he can to baffle justice, and even prevail upon Brumby to retract her confession, and lay it upon some other. He threatens any one who says he is the father, to put him into the spiritual court, or bring an action against him.

“Your advice, what steps to take in order to bring these criminals to public justice, would be very obliging and serviceable to me, and to the best of my parish. Our opinion is, that, being guarded with his *impenetrable brass*, he will obstinately deny the

fact; and, when he is presented, will refuse public penance. Perhaps he might be willing to commute, though we are inclined to believe that he would stand an excommunication, which we know he does not value, though a *capias* carried to an outlawry, we believe, would make him bend.

"I would not willingly be baffled in this matter, because I look upon the whole exercise of discipline, in my parish, in a great measure to depend upon this event.—I am, my most worthy friend, your entire friend and servant,
SAMUEL WESLEY."

The next letter, written six weeks afterwards, relates the steps which Mr Wesley took in this curious business. It was addressed "To the Worshipful Mr Chancellor Newell, at Lincoln :"—

"EPWORTH, Feb. 15, 1731.

"SIR,—I received yours, together with the order of penance for Benjamin Becket and Elizabeth (then) Locker; and have got them both to perform it at Epworth and Haxey, on the days appointed; but the woman, being weakly, was so disordered by standing with her naked feet, that the women, and even a midwife, assured me that she would hazard her life if she went to perform it the third time at Belton in the same manner.

"I could therefore do no more than send the man thither at the day appointed, who performed it the third time, according to order, as is certified by myself, Mr Hoole, Mr Morrice, and our churchwardens, on the instrument you sent us; which is ready to be returned at the visitation, or when you please. If you don't think it proper to remit the woman's doing penance the third time, which I entreat that you would, I shall, upon your order in a letter, oblige her to perform it to the full extent. She appeared the modestest w—— that I have met with on such an occasion, and is now an honest married wife, for I married them last Friday.

"As soon as this case was over, I fell at my second couple, having prepared the way by my addresses to a justice of the peace; and by disposing some of the best of my parishioners to join with me, on account of the charge that this illegitimate child of Sarah Brumby might bring upon the parish."

Mr Wesley then proceeds to narrate the proceedings which took place before the magistrate. Sarah Brumby confessed that her

child was illegitimate, but refused to tell who was its father. A witness, "one Mary Jackson, who had been guilty of fornication herself, and had then a bastard of about six feet high, had told Wesley that she had heard Brumby say that Aaron Man was the father, but when brought before the magistrate to give evidence, she denied all that she had said. Two other witnesses, however, Elizabeth Piers, and Elizabeth Dawson, the midwife, declared that they had heard Brumby frequently declare that the father of the child was Aaron Man." Mr Wesley then concludes his letter thus :—

"This is the evidence we have got. If we may ground a presentment on these proofs, in the taking which we have exactly followed the direction you were so kind to prescribe us, I believe I shall be able to induce my churchwardens to present both Aaron Man and Sarah Brumby, as soon as you will be so good as to teach us how we may proceed.—I am, honoured sir, your very obliged humble servant,
SAMUEL WESLEY."

Mr Wesley pursued this strange business during the whole of the year 1731. It appears that the churchwardens, William Watkins and Richard Samson, had neglected to present Aaron Man and Sarah Brumby for prosecution ; and that Mr Chancellor Newell had threatened to proceed against them for such neglect of duty. Meanwhile, another case had sprung up. Some years before, Eliza Hurst had been delivered of an illegitimate child, but refused to name the father. The Epworth churchwarden, for the time being, presented her, but no prosecution followed. Mr Wesley often wrote to the officials respecting her, but without effect. At length the woman came to him, and earnestly desired she might perform penance for her offence, whenever the court should order it. Wesley informed the Chancellor of this, and here the matter stuck. Since then, Hurst had cohabited with Thomas Thew, and was likely to have another child. She had wished to marry Thew, but Mr Wesley refused to perform the ceremony, until she had done penance for her former fault. It so happened, however, that there was "a strolling villain in the parish, called John England, and he coupled them together in a hemp-kiln, on Saturday, January 22, 1732, they having confessed to him their fornication, and he having absolved them for it."

In consequence of all this, Wesley found himself in an unpleasant position, and wrote to Chancellor Newell a complaining letter, dated "February 2, 1732," and which he concluded by subscribing himself, "Your much aggrieved friend and servant, SAMUEL WESLEY."

On the day following, he wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln:—

"EPWORTH, Feb. 3, 1732.

"MY LORD,—I received the high honour and favour of your lordship's, dated Bugden, Christmas-eve. I ever thought it my duty, since I have been the minister of any parish, to present those persons who were obnoxious in it, if the churchwardens neglected it, unless where the criminal was so sturdy, and so wealthy, as that I was morally certain I could not do it, without my own great inconvenience or ruin, in which cases God does not require it of me."

He then refers to the case of Aaron and Brumby, and his unfaithful churchwardens, and asks—

"What must I do with the two churchwardens, if they offer themselves to receive the sacrament? Ought I not to repel them from it, being satisfied in my own mind that they are notoriously perjured, and have thereby given great scandal to the congregation? One of them, Richard Samson, offered himself at the communion at Christmas, but I sent my clerk to desire him privately to withdraw, because I had written to your lordship about his case, and had not received your directions.

"Begging your lordship's blessing, and a line of answer, I remain, your lordship's ever devoted and most humble servant,

"SAMUEL WESLEY." *

These are curious letters, and are inserted here, not as a vindication of public penances, but simply to show Samuel Wesley's stern fidelity. They furnish a sketch of ecclesiastical discipline in the Church of England, at the time that Samuel Wesley's sons, John and Charles, were beginning their Methodist career at Oxford University. John Wesley tried to enforce the same sort of church discipline in Georgia; and all clergymen are bound, by their engagements, to do as Wesley did, that is, act according to the canons of their Church. Canon-law might need revision; no doubt it did;

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

but, because Samuel Wesley had bound himself to observe these ecclesiastical decrees, he was far too conscientious a man to treat them as though they did not exist. His stern, perhaps unwise, fidelity, often brought him into trouble; but, in the midst of all, his "rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, he had his conversation in the world."

During the year 1731, Samuel Wesley met with a most serious accident. Mrs Wesley gives a graphic account of it in the following letter to her son John:—*

"July 12, 1731.

"DEAR JACKY,—The particulars of your father's fall are as follows:—On Friday, June 4th, I, your sister Martha, and our maid, were going in our waggon to see the ground we hire of Mrs Knight, at Low Millwood. He sat in a chair at one end of the waggon, I in another at the other end, Matty between us, and the maid behind me. Just before we reached the close, going down a small hill, the horses took into a gallop; and out flew your father and his chair. The maid seeing the horses run, hung all her weight on my chair, and kept me from keeping him company. She cried out to William to stop the horses, and that her master was killed. The fellow leaped out of the seat, and stayed the horses, then ran to Mr Wesley, but, ere he got to him, two neighbours, who were providentially met together, raised his head, upon which he had pitched, and held him backward, by which means he began to respire; for it is certain, by the blackness in his face, that he had never drawn breath from the time of his fall till they helped him up. By this time, I was got to him, asked him how he did, and persuaded him to drink a little ale, for we had brought a bottle with us. He looked prodigiously wild, but began to speak, and told me he ailed nothing. I informed him of his fall. He said he 'knew nothing of any fall. He was as well as ever he was in his life.' We bound up his head, which was very much bruised, and helped him into the waggon again, and set him at the bottom of it, while I supported his head between my hands, and the man led the horses softly home. I sent presently for Mr Harper, who took a good quantity of blood from him; and then he began to feel pain in several parts, particularly in his side and shoulder. He had a very ill night, but, on

* *Clarke's Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 309.

Saturday morning, Mr Harper came again to him, dressed his head, and gave him something which much abated the pain in his side. We repeated the dose at bed-time, and, on Sunday, he preached twice, and gave the sacrament, which was too much for him to do; but nobody could dissuade him from it. On Monday he was ill, and slept almost all day. On Tuesday the gout came; but, with two or three nights taking Bateman, it went off again, and he has since been better than could be expected. We thought at first the waggon had gone over him; but it only went over his gown sleeve, and the nails took a little skin off his knuckles, but did him no further hurt."

Mr Wesley was now in his sixty-ninth year, and the effects of such an accident, of course, were serious and lasting. He had held the Epworth living for about five-and-thirty years; but being now, to a great extent, disabled, he proposed to resign it, if his son Samuel could use sufficient influence to be appointed his successor. The Wroot Rectory he had held not longer than about seven years, and, as John Whitelamb had recently become his curate, and had married his daughter Mary, he applied to the Lord Chancellor to have that living transferred to him. The following letters refer to these intended resignations, and to other matters:—

"Feb. 28, 1733.

"DEAR SON SAMUEL,—For several reasons, I have earnestly desired, especially in and since my last sickness, that you might succeed me in Epworth, in order to which I am willing and determined to resign the living, provided you could make an interest to have it in my room.

"My first and best reason for it is, because I am persuaded you would serve God and his people here better than I have done. Though, thanks be to God, after near forty years labour among them, they grow better, I having had above one hundred at my last sacrament, whereas I have had less than twenty formerly.

"My second reason relates to yourself. You have been a father to your brothers and sisters, especially to the former, who have cost you great sums in their education, both before and since they went to the University. Neither have you stopped here, but have showed your pity to your mother and me in a very liberal manner, wherein your wife joined with you, when you did not overmuch abound yourselves, and have even done noble charities to my child-

ren's children. Now, what should I be if I did not endeavour to make you easy to the utmost of my power, especially when I know that neither of you have your health in London?

"My third reason is from honest interest; I mean, that of our family. You know our circumstances. As for your aged and infirm mother, as soon as I drop, she must turn out, unless you succeed me; which, if you do, and she survives me, I know you will immediately take her then to your own house, or rather continue her there, where your wife and you will nourish her, till we meet again in heaven, and you will be a guide and stay to the rest of the family.

"There are a few things more which may seem to be tolerable reasons to me for desiring you to be my successor. -I have been at very great and uncommon expense on this living. I have rebuilt from the ground the parsonage barn and dovecote; leaded, and planked, and roofed, a great part of my chancel; rebuilt the parsonage house twice when it had been burnt, the first time one wing, the second time down to the ground, wherein I lost all my books and MSS., a considerable sum of money, all our linen, wearing apparel, and household stuff, except a little old iron, my wife and I being scorched with the flames, and all of us very narrowly escaping with life. This, by God's help, I built again, digging up the old foundations, and laying new ones. It cost me above £400, little or nothing of the old materials being left; besides the cost of new furniture from top to bottom, for we had now very little more than what Adam and Eve had when they first set up house-keeping. I then planted the two fronts of my house with wall fruit the second time, as I had done the front of the previous house, for the former all perished by the fire. I have set mulberries in my garden, which bear plentifully, as also cherries, pears, &c., and, in the adjoining croft, walnuts, and am planting more every day. And this I solemnly declare, not with any manner of view that any of mine should enjoy any fruit of my labour, when I have so long outlived all my friends; but my prospect was for some unknown person, that I might do what became me, and leave the living better than I found it.

"And yet, I might own, I could not help wishing, that all my care and charge might not be utterly lost to my family, but that some of them might be the better for it, though I despaired of it, till, some time since, the best of my parishioners pressed me earnestly to try if I could do anything in it.

"All I can do is to resign it to you, which I am ready frankly and gladly to do, scorning to make any conditions, for I know you better.

"I commend this affair, and you and yours, to God, as becomes your affectionate father,
SAMUEL WESLEY."*

Samuel Wesley, jun., declined his father's offer ; and, as we shall soon see, the same proposal was afterwards made to John. Meanwhile, the venerable rector still kept plodding at his work on the Book of Job. To the Rev. Mr Piggot, Vicar of Doncaster, he wrote respecting this, and respecting his late serious accident, as follows :—

"EPWORTH, Feb. 22, 1733.

"DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your civil letter. I cannot wonder that any should think long of Job's coming out, though it is common in books of this nature, especially when the author is absent from the press, and there are so many cuts and maps in it, as must be in mine. However, I owe it to my subscribers, and indeed to myself, to give some farther account of this matter.

"Now, if Job's friends have need of patience, at seeing him lie so long on the dunghill, or, which is much the same, the printing-house, how much more has Job himself need of it, who is sensible his reputation suffers more and more by the delay of it ; though, if he himself had died, as he was lately in a very fair way to it, having been as good as given over by three physicians, there would have been no manner of doubt to any one who knows the character of my son at Westminster, that every subscriber would have had his book.

"But I cannot be satisfied with this though I have lost the use of one hand in the service ; yet, I thank God, *non deficit altera*, and I begin to put it to school this day to learn to write, in order to help its lame brother. And when it can write legibly, I design, if it please God, to go to London myself this summer, to push on the editing, by helping to correct the press both in text and maps, and to frame the indexes, more than which I cannot do.

"Very many have forgot their large promises to assist me in it, so that I hardly expect to receive £100 clear for all my ten years' pains and labours ; but if you will be so kind as to communicate this to any of my subscribers, who may fall in your way,

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*, vol. ii. p. 256.

it may perhaps give some satisfaction to them, while it will be but a piece of justice to your most obliged friend and brother,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

Mr Wesley was naturally a humane man, and was always on the alert where benevolence was needed. The following letter is illustrative of this trait in his character :—

"EPWORTH, *March 27, 1733.*

"MR PORTEE,—Dorothy Whitehead, widow, lately died here, leaving four small children, and all in her house not sufficient to bury her, as you will see by the oath of her executor added to the will ; for a will she would have to dispose of a few roods of land, lest her children should fall out about it. The bearer, Simon Thew, who is her brother, consented to be her executor, that he might take care of her children. I gave him the oath, as you will see, as strictly as I could, and am satisfied it is all exactly true. They were so poor that I forgave them what was due for it, and so did even my clerk for the burial. If there be any little matter due for the probate of the will, I entreat and believe you will be as low as possible ; wherein you know your charity will be acceptable to God, and will much oblige, your ready friend,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."†

As intimated in a previous letter, Mr Wesley went to London towards the end of the year 1733. Whilst there, he addressed the following letter "to the Lord Chancellor, for John Whitelamb, now curate of Epworth" :—

"WESTMINSTER, *Jan. 14, 1734.*

"MY LORD,—The small rectory of Wroot, in the diocese and county of Lincoln, adjoining to the Isle of Axholme, is in the gift of the Lord Chancellor, and more than seven years since was conferred on Samuel Wesley, rector of Epworth. It lies in our low levels, and is often overflowed. During the four or five years that I have had it, the people have lost the fruits of the earth to that degree that it has hardly brought me in £50 per annum, *omnibus annis* ; and some years not enough to pay my curate there his salary of £30 a-year. This living, by your lordship's permission

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

† *Ibid.*

and favour, I would gladly resign to one Mr John Whitelamb, born in the neighbourhood of Wroot, where his father and grandfather lived, when I took him from among the scholars of a charity school, (founded by one Mr Travers, an attorney,) brought him to my house, and educated him there, where he was my amanuensis for four years, in transcribing my 'Dissertations on the Book of Job,' now well advanced in the press; and was employed in drawing my maps and figures for it, as well as we could by the light of nature. After this, I sent him to Oxford to my son, John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, under whom he made such proficiency, that he was, the last summer, admitted by the Bishop of Oxford into deacon's orders, and placed my curate in Epworth, while I came up to town to expedite the printing of my book.

"Since I was here, I gave consent to his marrying one of my seven daughters, and they are married accordingly; and though I can spare little more with her, yet I would gladly give them a little glebe land at Wroot, where I am sure they will not want springs of water. But *they* love the place, though I can get nobody else to reside on it.

"If I do not flatter myself, he is indeed a valuable person, of uncommon brightness, learning, piety, and indefatigable industry, always loyal to the king, zealous for the Church, and friendly to our Dissenting brethren; and for the truth of this character I will be answerable to God and man.

"If, therefore, your lordship will grant me the favour to let me resign the living unto him, and please to confer it on him, I shall always remain, your lordship's most bounden, most grateful, and most obedient servant,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1734, p. 108, the following announcement is made, in the list of ecclesiastical preferments:—"Mr Whitelamb to the rectory of Wroot, Lincolnshire."

Mr Wesley's two sons, John and Charles, were still at Oxford, and, with the other members of "the Holy Club," were receiving the sacrament once a week, were practising the fasts of the English Church, visiting prisoners in the gaol, and the destitute in the city, and were abridging themselves of all the superfluities,

* *Wesley Family.*

and of many of the conveniences of life, for the purpose of relieving the distress with which they met. In December 1731, Samuel Wesley visited his two sons at Oxford, to see for himself the good they were doing, and to obtain direct information respecting their temper and spirit. In a letter to his wife, he says he "was well paid both for his expense and labour by their *shining piety*." During the course of the ensuing summer, in 1732, John Wesley made two visits to Epworth; and two others in January and in June 1733. His father's health had been seriously affected ever since his sad accident in June 1731; and as Samuel Wesley, jun., had declined to become his father's successor at Epworth, the same proposal was now made to John,* and a long correspondence followed, which lasted till the end of 1734.† In a long letter to his father, written at this period, John Wesley assigns his reasons for declining the proposal. At Oxford he always had at hand half a dozen friends like-minded with himself; he was free from idle and trifling visitors, except once a month when he invited some of the students to breakfast with him; he was free from cares, and had the opportunity of attending public prayer twice a day; he could be holier and usefuller at Oxford than anywhere else; and the care of two thousand souls at Epworth was a greater weight than he had ability to bear.

His father replied to many of these objections in the following letter:—

"Nov. 20, 1734.

"DEAR SON,—Your only argument is this: 'The question is not whether I could do more good to others there or here, but whether I could do more good to myself; seeing wherever I can be most holy myself, there I can most promote holiness in others. But I can improve myself more at Oxford than at any other place.'

"To this I answer—

"1. It is not dear self but the glory of God, and the different degrees of promoting it, which should be our main consideration in the choice of any course of life.

"2. Supposing you could be more holy yourself at Oxford, how does it follow that you could more promote holiness in others there than elsewhere? Have you found many instances of it, after

* See Moore's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. pp. 174-210.

† See *Original Letters*, published by Priestley, pp. 20-48.

so many years hard pains and labour? Further, I dare say, you are more modest and just than to say, there are no holier men than you at Oxford; and yet it is possible they may not have promoted holiness more than you have done; as I doubt not but you might have done it much more, had you taken the right method. For there is a particular turn of mind for these matters—great prudence as well as great fervour.

“3. I cannot allow austerity or fasting, considered by themselves, to be proper acts of holiness, nor am I for a solitary life. God made us for a social life; we are not to bury our talents; we are to let our light shine before men, and that not barely through the chinks of a bushel, for fear the wind should blow it out. The design of lighting it was, that it might give light to all that went into the house of God. And to this academical studies are only preparatory.

“4. You are sensible what figures those make who stay in the university till they are superannuated. I cannot think drowsiness promotes holiness. How commonly do they drone away life, either in a college or in a country parsonage, where they can only give God the snuffs of them, having nothing of life or vigour left to make them useful in the world.

“5. We are not to fix our eye on one single point of duty, but to take in the complicated view of all the circumstances in every state of life that offers. Thus in the case before us, put all circumstances together. If you are not indifferent whether the labours of an aged father, for above forty years in God’s vineyard, be lost, and the fences of it trodden down and destroyed; if you consider that Mr M—— must in all probability succeed me if you do not, and that the prospect of that mighty Nimrod’s coming hither shocks my soul, and is in a fair way of bringing down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; if you have any care for our family, which must be dismally shattered as soon as I am dropt; if you reflect on the dear love and longing which this poor people have for you, you may perhaps alter your mind, and bend your will to His, who has promised, if in all our ways we acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths.”*

A large portion of the correspondence on this momentous business was carried on during Samuel Wesley’s sojourn in London,

* *Original Letters*, published by Priestley, p. 48.

at the commencement of the year 1734. On the 30th of March, John Brown set out from Epworth to London, to accompany the venerable rector to his home.* On his arrival, he wrote as follows to Dr Reynolds, Bishop of Lincoln :—

“ EPWORTH, *May 2, 1734.*

“ MY LORD,—I thank God I got well home, and found all well here. My son-in-law, Mr Whitelamb, is gone with his wife to reside at Wroot, and takes true pains among the people. He designs to be inducted immediately after visitation.

“ At my return to Epworth, looking a little among my people, I found there were two strangers come hither, both of which I have discovered to be Papists, though they come to church, and I have hopes of making one or both of them good members of the Church of England.”†

Mr Wesley was always brimful of benevolence, and, as soon as he was at home again, he showed it. Hence the following characteristic letter :—

“ EPWORTH, *May 14, 1734.*

“ MR STEPHENSON,—As soon as I heard from John Brown that your kinswoman Stephenson had writ to you for her son Timothy, and that you had desired her to send for him up, I spoke to several of my best parishioners, Mr John Maw, Mr Barnard, and others, that we might be as kind to him as we have been to others, who have been put apprentices at the public charge, which could be done but meanly at £5, though his mother should be able to provide a few shoes and stockings besides for him. I went twice, on your account and his, to a public meeting at the church, before I had seen the mother or the boy, but the highest sum we could bring our people to, in order to make a man of him, was no more than £3, which I knew was far short of the requisite amount. On Sunday last I went and talked to Mr John Maw and Mr Barnard, and we resolved to make up the rest by a private contribution among ourselves. The next day, I sent for the lad and his mother to my house, and accordingly they came. I found he was a lad of spirit, and that he would please you. I encouraged them both, and told his mother that she might depend on £5, besides what she herself could do to set him out.

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 33.

† *Wesley Family*.

This was all that I could do for him, and if herein I have been over-officious I hope you will, at least, excuse it from your obliged friend,
 SAMUEL WESLEY.*

At this period, General Oglethorpe had become a man of mark in England. After finishing his education at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he was appointed secretary and aide-de-camp to Prince Eugene, under whom he acted at the famous siege of Belgrade. While on the Continent, a prince of Wirtemberg, with whom he was at table, took up a glass of wine, and threw a portion of its contents into his face. "That's a good joke, my prince," said young Oglethorpe, smiling, "but we do it much better in England;" and so saying he dashed a glass full of wine at his Serene Highness in return. Returning to England about 1722, Oglethorpe became member of the House of Commons for Haslemere, which he represented in five successive parliaments, from 1722 to 1754. In 1729, having found a friend suffering most barbarous treatment in the Fleet Prison, and taking the precedence of John Howard, he called the attention of the House of Commons to the fact, and was appointed chairman of a committee to examine into the state of prisons, where cruelties of the most revolting description had long been practised. About the same period, some charitable person bequeathed to Oglethorpe and others a large sum of money in trust, to procure the discharge of poor debtors; and Oglethorpe, soon afterwards, obtained a grant of £10,000 from government, and also a very liberal public subscription, to enable the liberated insolvents to emigrate to Georgia. He proceeded to that country at the head of such a body of settlers about the year 1733, and returned to England in 1734, bringing with him some Indian chiefs, who were presented to the king.

Immediately after his arrival,† Mr Wesley addressed to him the following letter respecting his "Dissertations on the Book of Job;" and it is possible that this letter was the first of a series of causes, which, in 1735, led John and Charles Wesley to accompany the general to his newly-formed colony:—

"*EPWORTH, July 6, 1734.*

"HONOURED SIR,—May I be admitted, while such crowds of

* *Wesley Family.*

† Oglethorpe arrived on the 16th of June.

our nobility and gentry are pouring in their congratulations, to press, with my poor mite of thanks, into the presence of one who so well deserves the title of Universal Benefactor to mankind. It is not only your valuable favours on many occasions to my son, late of Westminster, and to myself, when I was not a little pressed in the world, nor your more extensive and generous charity to the poor prisoners; it is not only this that so much demands my warmest acknowledgments, as your disinterested and immovable attachment to your country, and your raising a new country, or rather a little world of your own, in the midst of almost wild woods and uncultivated deserts, where men may live free and happy, if they are not hindered by their own stupidity and folly, in spite of the unkindness of their brother mortals.

"Neither ought I to forget your singular goodness to my little scholar and parishioner, John Lyndal. Since he went over, I have received some money for him; and it seems necessary that he should make a slip hither into Lincolnshire, if you could spare him for a fortnight or a month, to settle his affairs with his father's creditors, which I hope he may now nearly do, and then he will have a clear estate left of about £6 a-year, to dispose of as he pleases. I hope he has behaved with such faithfulness and industry, since he has had the honour and happiness of waiting upon you, as not to have forfeited the favour of so good a master.*

"I owe you, sir, beside this, some account of my little affairs since the beginning of your expedition. Notwithstanding my own and my son's violent illness, which held me half a year, and him above a twelvemonth, I have made a shift to get more than three parts in four of Job† printed off, and both the printing, paper, and maps hitherto are paid for. My son, John, at Oxford (now his elder brother is gone to Tiverton) takes care of the remainder of the impression in London; and I have an ingenious artist here with me, in my house at Epworth, who is graveng and working off the remaining maps and figures for me, so that I hope, if the printer does not hinder me, I shall have the whole ready by next spring, and by God's leave be in London myself to deliver the books perfect. I print five hundred copies, as in my proposals,

* Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

† General Oglethorpe subscribed for nine copies of the "*Dissertations on the Book of Job*," a greater number than was subscribed for by any other person.

whereof I have above three hundred already subscribed for ; and among my subscribers, fifteen or sixteen English Bishops, with some of Ireland.

"I have not yet done with my own impertinent nostrums. I thank God I find I creep up hill more than I did formerly, being eased of the weight of four daughters out of seven, as I hope I shall of the fifth in a little longer.

"When Mr Lyndal comes down, I shall trouble you by him with a copy of all the maps and figures which I have yet printed, they costing me no more than the paper since the graving is over.*

"If you will please herewith to accept the tender of my most sincere respect and gratitude, you will thereby confer one further obligation on, honoured sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,
SAMUEL WESLEY."†

The following letter was written to a friend, and shows his anxiety for the spiritual welfare of all with whom he was acquainted :—

"EPWORTH, NEAR GAINSBOROUGH, July 11, 1734.

"DEAR FRIEND,—Though I have not been worthy to hear from you, or to have seen any letter of yours since I saw you last, yet I cannot but retain the same warmth of Christian affection for you which I conceived at our first sight and acquaintance, as I believe you did the like for me and mine. Your friend of Queen's, whom we call Nathaniel, and who brought us the last good news of your health, is gone to his relations in Yorkshire, but promises to return and meet you here, when you and your friends come down to see us at our fair, in August next. If Charles is short of money, pray tell him he is welcome to twenty shillings here to make him easier in his journey. But I think I can tell you of what will please you more ; for last Sunday, at the sacrament, it was darted into my mind that it was a pity you and your company, while you are here, should be deprived of the benefit of weekly sacraments which you enjoy where you are at present ; and I therefore resolved, if you desire it, while you are here, to have the communion every Sunday ; and, lest some of the parish should grumble at it, the offerings of us who communicate will defray the small ex-

* *Clarke's Wesley Family.*

† *Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 810.

pense of it. If there be anything else which you can desire, and which is in my power to grant or procure, you are hereby already assured of it. If I could write anything kinder, my dear friend, I would ; and I shall see by your acceptance of it, and compliance with it, whether you believe me, your sincere friend, and half-namesake,

SAMUEL WESLEY.*

The following letter to General Oglethorpe evinces the intense interest he felt in the colony of Georgia, for which his two sons, John and Charles, embarked eleven months afterwards :—

“EPWORTH, NEAR GAINSBOROUGH, Nov. 7, 1734.

“HONOURED SIR,—I am at length, I thank God, slowly recovering from a long illness, during which there have been few days or nights but my heart has been working hard for Georgia, and for my townsman, John Lyndal. It is in answer to the favour of yours, and of his last, that I write these to both. I am extremely concerned lest an inundation of ruin should break in upon your colony, and destroy that, as it has almost done some others. But I have some better hopes, because I hear you do not design to plant it with canes, but with some more innocent, and I hope, as profitable produce, any of which, whether mulberries or saffron, I should be glad to hear were begun in Georgia. I confess I cannot expect God’s blessing, even on the greatest industry, without true piety and the fear of God. I had always so dear a love for your colony that if it had been but ten years ago, I would gladly have devoted the remainder of my life and labours to that place, and think I might before this time have conquered the language without which little can be done among the natives, if the Bishop of London would have done me the honour to have sent me thither, as perhaps he then might, but that is now over. However, I can still reach them with my prayers, which I am sure will never be wanting.

“My letter to Mr Lyndal relates to his own particular affairs here in the country ; for though his effects are not large, they ought by no means to be neglected, and I have given him the best advice I am able ; but if your wisdom should think otherwise, I desire the letter may be sunk, or else go forward to him by the next opportunity.

* *Wesley Family.*

"With all the thanks I am capable of, I remember your kindness to my son, formerly of Westminster, to myself, and to my parishioner Lyndal; and am, with the truest respect and gratitude, your honour's most obliged and most humble servant,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

The following is the letter to Mr Lyndal:—

"EPWORTH, NEAR GAINSBOROUGH, Nov. 7, 1734.

MR LYNDAL,—I have not been a little concerned for the unsettledness of your affairs at Wroot. I have somewhat above £10 of yours in my hands, and think the best and the honestest way you could do, would be to pay that money, as far as it will go, towards the interest of what your father had taken up upon his estate while he was living. Mr Epworth has brought me a letter from his mother, wherein she says there was a bond of £10, and a note of £20, as I remember, due to Mr Epworth's father. She desired you would pay off the £10 with interest, and they would stay for the £20. I told him that could not be done, because there was so little money amongst us all, and therefore I thought the fairest and wisest way was to divide the money I had in my hand, to pay the interest proportionally as far as it would go.

"As for your estate, which is in the tenure of Robert Brumby, I suppose about £5 or £6 a year, I think it would be best for you to fix two or three trustees, and make him yearly accountable to them. If you like it, I will be one of them myself as long as I live; my son, Whitelamb, would be another; and we think we could persuade Mr Romley, the schoolmaster, to be the third, who so well understands the whole matter.

"I find your father owed your uncle, John Barrow, £4, 10s., and Goody Stephenson £5. John Barrow is willing to take it when you can pay him, without interest, and so should Stephenson, too, but only she is poor, and therefore I will give her five shillings on your account, if you think fit. Let me hear from you as soon as you can after the receipt of this.

"And now I have some little inquiries to make of your new country. Whether any of our ministers understand their language, and can preach to them without an interpreter? Whether they speak the same language with those Indians who are near

* *Wesley Family.*

them, of Saltsburg and Carolina ; or of those of New England, who, I know, have the Bible translated into their language? Whether your Indians have the Lord's Prayer in their own language? which, if they have, I desire you would send me a copy in your next. In all which, especially in loving God and your neighbour, you would exceedingly oblige, your sincere friend,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."*

These two letters to Oglethorpe and Lyndal were written six days after the burial of Mrs Whitelamb, Mr Wesley's daughter. † Poor Whitelamb was exceedingly distressed by his sad bereavement, and, in the depth of his grief, wished to go to Georgia. Hence the following letter to Oglethorpe, which was written exactly a month after the former one :—

"ERWORTH, Dec. 7, 1734.

"DEAR SIR,—I cannot express how much I am obliged by your last kind and instructive letter concerning the affairs of Georgia. I could not read it over without sighing, when I again reflected on my own age and infirmities, which made such an expedition utterly impracticable for me. Yet my mind worked hard about it ; and it is not impossible but Providence may have directed me to such an expedient as may prove more serviceable to your colony than I should ever have been.

"The thing is thus :—There is a young man, who has been with me a pretty many years, and assisted me in my work on Job ; after which I sent him to Oxford, to my son, John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, who took care of his education, where he behaved himself very well, and improved in piety and learning. Having got him into deacon's orders, I sent for him down, and he was my curate in my absence in London ; when I resigned my small living of Wroot to him, and he was instituted and inducted there. I likewise consented to his marrying one of my daughters, there having been a long and intimate friendship between them. But neither he nor I were so happy as to have them live long together ; for she died in child-bed of her first child. He was so inconsolable at her loss, that I was afraid he would soon have followed her ; to prevent which, I desired his company here at my own house, that

* *Wesley Family.*

† *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 151.

he might have some amusement and business, by assisting me in my cure during my illness.

"It was then, sir, I just received the favour of yours, and let him see it for his diversion ; more especially, because John Lyndal and he had been fellow-parishioners and school-fellows at Wroot, and had no little kindness one for the other. I made no great reflection on the thing at first ; but, soon after, I found he had thought often upon it, was very desirous to go to Georgia himself, and wrote the enclosed letter to me on the subject. As I knew not of any person more proper for such an undertaking, I thought the least I could do was to send the letter to your honour, who would be so very proper a judge of the affair ; and, if you approve, I shall not be wanting in my addresses to my Lord Bishop of London, or any other, since I expect to be in London myself at spring, to forward the matter, as far as it will go.

"As for his character, I shall take it upon myself to say, that he is a good scholar, a sound Christian, and a good liver. He has a very happy memory, especially for languages, and a judgment and intelligence not inferior. My eldest son at Tiverton has some knowledge of him, concerning whom I have writ to him since your last to me. My two others, his tutor at Lincoln, and my third of Christ Church, have been long and intimately acquainted with him ; and I doubt not but they will give him, at least, as just a character as I have done.

"And here I shall drop the matter, till I have the honour of hearing again from you ; and shall either drop it or prosecute it, as appears most proper to your maturer judgment ; ever remaining, your honour's most sincere, and most obliged friend and servant,
SAMUEL WESLEY." *

These are remarkable and important letters, and doubtless served as links, in the chain of cause and effect, which led to the selection of John and Charles Wesley for the mission in Georgia. The missionary spirit was a passion in the Wesley family, when Christian missions to the heathen scarce existed. John Wesley, after being ejected from his church living, in 1662, longed to go as a missionary, first to Surinam, and afterwards to Maryland. Samuel Wesley, his son, when a young man of between thirty and forty years of age, formed a magnificent scheme to go as a

* *Wesley Family.*

missionary to India, China, and Abyssinia; and, in the last year of his life, most feelingly laments that he was not young enough to go to Georgia. His sons, John and Charles, now at Oxford, caught his spirit, and, within twelve months after the date of the last letter, actually went. John Whitelamb, his son-in-law, wished to go; but, for some unknown reason, was kept at home.

As already stated, Oglethorpe went to Georgia in 1733, with a number of released debtors, who were the first settlers in the colony. These were joined by a number of persecuted Protestants, who had been driven from Salzburg, a city of Bavaria, by the archbishop of the place. On October 14, 1735, six months after Samuel Wesley's death, Oglethorpe re-embarked for Georgia, with five hundred and seventy adventurers, among whom were one hundred and thirty Highlanders, and one hundred and seventy Germans, of whom a considerable number were Moravians.* The trustees of the colony requested John Wesley and some of his friends to accompany the emigrants. Wesley consulted his widowed mother. Her answer was: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice they were all so well employed, though I should never see them more."† The thing was settled, and away Wesley went, his brother Charles, and their Oxford friends, Benjamin Ingham and Charles Delamotte, going with him.

Samuel Wesley strongly wished his son John to be his successor at Epworth; but John, four months before his father's death, decisively declined the proposal. He was resolved to remain at Oxford, because he imagined he could be holier at Oxford than he could be anywhere else. The rector died, and then his son changed his mind, and set out on the very mission upon which his father had set his heart, and to be engaged in which he would, if he had been ten years younger, have gladly relinquished Epworth Church. The following letter refers to John Wesley's final refusal of his father's proposition. It was written to Samuel Wesley, jun., four months previous to Mr Wesley's decease:—

"EPWORTH, Dec. 4, 1734.

"DEAR SON,—Having pretty many things to write to you, and those of no small moment; and being for the most part confined to my house by pain and weakness, so that I have not yet ventured to church on a Sunday, I have just now sat down to try if I can

* *Wesley Family*, vol. ii. p. 175. † *Moore's Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 234.

reduce my thoughts into any tolerable order. Though I can write but few lines in a day, yet being under my own hand, they may not be the less acceptable to you.

"I shall throw what I have a mind you shall know, under three heads.—1. What most immediately concerns our own family. 2. Dick Ellison, the wen of my family, and his poor insects that are sucking me to death. 3. J. Whitelamb;—and, perhaps, in a post-script, a little of my own personal affairs, and of the poor.

"1. Of our family. Your brother John has at last writ me, 'that it is now his unalterable resolution not to accept of Epworth living, if he could have it;' and the reason he gives for it in these words:—'The question is not whether I could do more good to others *there* or *here*, but whether I could do more good to myself; seeing wherever I can be most holy myself, there, I am assured, I can most promote holiness in others. But I am equally assured there is no place under heaven so fit for my improvement as Oxford. Therefore,' &c.

"Thus stands his argument. Though I am no more fond of the gripping and wrangling distemper than I am of Mr Harper's * boluses and clysters, (for age would again have rest,) I sat myself down to try if I could unravel his sophisms, and hardly one of his assertions appeared to me to be universally true. I think the main of my answer was, that he seemed to mistake the end of academical studies, which were chiefly preparatory, in order to qualify men to instruct others.

"He thinks there is no place so fit for his improvement as Oxford. As to many sorts of useful knowledge, it may be nearly true; but surely there need be a knowledge, too, of men and things (which has not been thought the most attainable in a cloister) as well as of books, or else we shall find ourselves of much less use in the world.

"But the best and greatest improvement is in solid piety and religion, which (in Oxford) is handy to be got, or promoted, by being hung up in Socrates' basket. But allowing that austerity and mortification may either be a means of promoting holiness, or, in some degree, a part of it, why may not a man exercise these in his own house as strictly as in any college, in any university in Europe, and, perhaps, with less censure and observation? Neither can I understand the meaning or drift of being thus ever learning,

* His son-in-law, who was a doctor at Epworth.

and never coming to a due proficiency in the knowledge and practice of the truth, so as to be able commendably to instruct others in it.

“Thus far I have written with my own hand, both to you and your brother, for many days together; but I am now so heartily tired that I must, contrary to my resolution, get my son White-lamb to transcribe and finish it. I have done what I could, with such a shattered head and body, to satisfy the scruples which your brother has raised against my proposal, from conscience and duty; but if your way of thinking be the same with mine, especially after you have read and weighed what follows, you will be able to convince him in a much clearer and stronger manner.

“The remaining considerations I offered to him were for the most part such as follow:—I urged, among other things, the great precariousness of my own health, and the sensible decay of my strength, so that he would hardly know me if he saw me now; the deplorable state in which I should leave your mother and the family, and the loss of near forty years’ honest labour in this place, where I could expect no other, but that the field which I have been so long sowing with good seed, and the vineyard, which I have planted with no ignoble vine, must be soon rooted up, and the fences of it broken down,—for I am morally satisfied, if your brothers both slight it, Mr P—— will be my successor.

“I hinted at one thing, which I mentioned in my letter to your brother, whereon I depend more than upon all my own simple reasoning; and that is, earnest prayer to Him who smiles at the strongest resolutions of mortals, and can, in a moment, change or demolish them; who alone can bend the inflexible sinew, and order the irregular wills of us simple men to His own glory, and to our happiness. While the anchor holds, I despair of nothing, but firmly believe that He who is best will do what is best, whether we earnestly will it or will it not. There I rest the whole matter, and leave it with Him, to whom I have committed all my concerns, without exception and without reserve, for soul and body, estate and family, time and eternity.*

* Samuel Wesley, jun., wrote to his brother John the day after he received this letter from his father; and a sharp correspondence was carried on between the two brothers, until the 4th of March 1735, which was within two months of their father’s death. John, however, at that time, remained as firmly convinced as ever that he could serve God and his Church better at Oxford than he could if he removed to Epworth.—MOORE’S *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 231.

"2. As to the second part of my letter concerning R. Ellison,* I have charity crammed down my throat every day, and sometimes his company at meals, which you will believe as pleasant to me as all my physic. But this is beyond the reach of all my little prudence, and therefore I find I must leave it as I have done, in some good measure before, to Him who orders all things.

"3. The third part of my letter is in relation to my son Whitelamb, and is of almost as great concern as the former, and on some accounts perhaps greater.† You will find the whole affair contained in a letter I lately sent to Mr Oglethorpe, and in my son Whitelamb's to myself. The letters are so full, that they have exhausted what we had to say on that subject; and nothing at present need or can be added. I desire you therefore to weigh the whole with the utmost impartiality; and, if you are of the same mind with myself and your mother, who entirely approves of the design, that you would yourself write to Mr Oglethorpe, as I promised you would, and send him your thoughts, and use your good offices about it.

"And now, as to my minute affairs, I doubt not but you will, as you gave me hopes when you went into Devon, improve your interest among the gentlemen, your friends, and get me some more subscribers, as likewise an account whether there be any prospect yet remaining of obtaining any favour from the Duke of Newcastle, in relation to the affair.‡—Yours,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."§

The last letter we shall introduce is a review of his life, and therefore an appropriate conclusion of the present chapter.

It has been already mentioned that Mr Wesley had a brother, named Matthew, who practised as a physician in London. There does not appear to have been much intimacy between the two brothers; but, after the fire at Epworth in 1709, Matthew took

* This was the rich man who married Sukey Wesley, and whom Mrs Wesley spoke of as being little inferior to the apostate angels in wickedness.

† This again shows the high importance which Samuel Wesley attached to the mission in Georgia; and is proof sufficient that had he been alive, the going of his two sons, John and Charles to that colony, would have had his hearty approval.

‡ The Duke of Newcastle was at this time Secretary of State, and had probably been requested to obtain the consent of Queen Caroline to allow Mr Wesley to dedicate to her his "Dissertations on the Book of Job."

§ *Wesley Family.*

to his house his brother's two children, Hetty and Susan; and afterwards in 1720, he, in a similar manner, took Patty, who lived in his house for twelve years, and to whom, on her marriage, he gave a dowry of £500. Matthew Wesley was a man of considerable wealth; but he had obtained it by unwearied diligence, and by the utmost economy. He knew next to nothing of the troubles of a family, and was ill-qualified to judge of family expenses.

In 1731, accompanied by his man-servant, he started from London to Epworth on a visit to his brother. He travelled under a feigned name, and intended to take his brother by surprise; but his man not being so taciturn as himself, the secret oozed out, and the family were prepared for his coming. The first day after his arrival he spoke little to the children, being employed in observing their behaviour, so that he might know how he ought to like them. He was strangely scandalised at the poor furniture of the parsonage, and at the meanness of the children's clothing, and wondered what his brother had done with all his income. He always behaved himself decently at family prayers, and, when Mr Wesley was absent, said grace before and after meat. On his return to London, he wrote a severe and caustic letter to his brother, accusing him of bad economy, and of not making provision for his large family. Part of this strange epistle was as follows:—

“The same record which assures us an infidel cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, also asserts, in the consequence, that a worse than infidel can never do it. It likewise describes the character of such a one: ‘He provides not for his own, especially for those of his own house.’

“You have a numerous offspring; you have had a long time a plentiful estate, and have made no provision for those of your own house, who can have nothing in view at your exit but distress. This I think a black account; let the cause be folly, or vanity, or ungovernable appetites. I hope Providence has restored you again to give you time to settle this balance, which shocks me to think of. To this end, I must advise you to be frequent in your perusal of Father Beveridge on *Repentance*, and Dr Tillotson on *Restitution*; for it is not saying Lord, Lord, will bring us to the kingdom of heaven, but doing justice to all our fellow-creatures; and not a poetical imagination that we do so. A serious con-

sideration of these things, and suitable actions, I doubt not, will qualify you to meet me where sorrow shall be no more, which is the highest hope and expectation of yours,

"MATTHEW WESLEY."*

This is an unjust, unfeeling, disreputable letter, and it is certainly surprising that Mehetabel Wesley, when her uncle died six years after, should have so eulogised his character as she did, in her elegy, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1737. He might be a man of much learning and information, a good judge and lover of poetry, and clever in his profession; but the above epistle makes one doubt that he was "a man of truly benevolent mind," and prepares one to receive Patty Wesley's statement respecting him, written a year before the time of his Epworth visit, viz., that he was not converted, nor what he ought to be.† He seems to have been highly esteemed for his professional ability and services; but a stranger to pure, earnest, heartfelt godliness. He treated John Wesley's mission to Georgia with ridicule, and told Charles that, "if the French had any remarkably dull fellow among them, they sent him to convert the Indians." Charles says he checked and silenced his uncle's art and eloquence by repeating the lines of his brother:—

"To distant realms the apostle need not roam,
Darkness, alas! and heathens are at home."‡

A few months before his death, Samuel Wesley replied to his brother's accusations, in a long letter, twenty lines of which were written by himself, about one-half of it by Mrs Wesley, and the remainder by his son John, who acted as his amanuenses. The letter, which is without date, is written in a serio-jocose style, and is headed "John o' Styles' Apology against the imputation of his ill husbandry." A friend is represented as reading Matthew Wesley's letter to his brother, John o' Styles, and as reporting the brother's answer to the charges brought against him. The pretended narrator says:—

"When I had read this to my friend John o' Styles, I was a little surprised that he did not fall into flouncing and bouncing, as I have too often seen him do on far less provocation, which I ascribed to a fit of sickness he had lately had, and which I hope

* *Wesley Family.*

+ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 324.

‡ *C. Wesley's Journal*, vol. i. p. 59.

may have brought him to something of a better mind. He stood calm and composed for a minute or two, and then desired he might peruse the letter, adding, that if the matter of fact therein were true, and not aggravated or misrepresented, he was obliged in conscience to acknowledge it, and ask pardon at least of his family, if he could make them no other satisfaction. If it were ~~not~~ true, he owed that justice to himself and his family, to clear himself of so vile an imputation. After he had read it over he said he did not think it necessary to enter into a detail of the history of his whole life, from sixteen to upwards of seventy ; but he would make some general observations on those general accusations which have been brought against him, and then would add some balance of his incomes and expenses ever since he entered on the stage of life.

“The sum of the libel may be reduced to the following assertions :—1. That John o’ Styles is worse than an infidel, and therefore can never go to heaven ; which secondly, he aims at proving, because he provides not for his own house ; as notorious instances of which, he adds, in the third place, that in the pursuits of his pleasures he had produced a numerous offspring, and has had a long time a plentiful estate, and great and generous benefactors, but yet has made no provision for those of his own house ; which he thinks, in the last place, a black account, let the cause be folly, or vanity, or his own irregular passions.

“*Answer.*—If God has blessed him with a numerous offspring, he has no reason to be ashamed of them, nor they of him, unless perhaps one of them. Neither does his conscience accuse him that he has made no provision for those of his own house ; which general accusation includes them all. But has he none, nay, not above one, two, or three, to whom he has given the best education which England could afford, by God’s blessing on which they live honourably and comfortably in the world ? Some of them had already been a considerable help to the others, as well as to himself ; and he has no reason to doubt the same of the rest, as soon as God shall enable them to do it. There are many gentlemen’s families in England who, by the same method, provide for their younger children ; and he hardly thinks that there are many of greater estates but would be glad to change the best of theirs, or even all their stock, for almost the worst of his.

“Neither is he ashamed in claiming some merit in his having

been so happy in breeding them up in his own principles and practices—not only the priests in his family, but all the rest—to a steady opposition and confederacy against all such as are avowed and declared enemies to God and his clergy, and who deny or disbelieve any articles of natural or revealed religion, as well as to such as are open or secret friends to the Great Rebellion, or to any such principles as do but squint towards the same practices; so that he hopes they are all staunch High-Church, and for inviolable passive obedience; * from which, if any of them should be so wicked as to degenerate, he cannot tell whether he could prevail with himself to give them his blessing; though, at the same time, he almost equally abhors all servile submission to the greatest and most overgrown tool of State, whose avowed design it is to aggrandise his prince at the expense of the liberties and properties of his freeborn subjects.†

“Thus much for John o’ Styles’ ecclesiastical and political creed; and, as he hopes, for those of his family. And as his adversary adds, that ‘at his exit they could have nothing in view but distress, and that it is a black account, let the cause be folly, or vanity, or ungovernable appetites;’ John o’ Styles answered: He has not the least doubt of God’s provision for his family after his decease, if they continue in the way of righteousness. As for his folly, he owns he can hardly demur to the charge; for he fairly acknowledges he never was, nor ever will be, like the children of this world, who are accounted wise in their generation, in doting upon this world, courting this world, and regarding nothing else: not but that he has all his life laboured truly both with his hands, head, and heart, to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to get his own living, and that of those who have been dependents on him.

“As for his vanity, he challenges an instance to be given of any extravagance in any single branch of his expenses through the whole course of his life, either in dress, diet, horses, recreation, or diversion, either in himself or family.

“Now if these, which are the main objections, are wiped off,

* “This is a sly hit at Matthew Wealey, who is supposed to have been a Dissenter, and who was thought by some to be indifferent to all forms of religion.”—See *Wealey Family*, vol. i. p. 86.

† This shaft seems to be levelled against the Duke of Newcastle, or perhaps Sir Robert Walpole.

what becomes of the black account, or of the worse than infidelity which this *Severus Frater et Avunculus Puerorum* has, in the plenitude of his power, urged, to exclude those, who, for want of equal illumination or equal estates, think or act differently from himself, out of the kingdom of heaven?

"As for the plentiful estates, and great and generous benefactions which he likewise mentions, the person accused answered, that he could never acknowledge as he ought the goodness of God and of his generous benefactors; but hopes he may add, that he had never tasted so much of their kindness if they had not believed him to be an honest man.

"Thus much he said in general, but added as to particular instances, he should only add a blank balance, and leave it to any after his death to cast it up according to common equity; and then they would be more proper judges whether he deserved those imputations which are now thrown upon him.

"*Imprimis*.—When he first walked to Oxford he had in cash, £2 5 0

"He lived there till he took his bachelor's degree, without any preferment or assistance, except one crown, 0 5 0

"By God's blessing on his own industry he brought to London, 10 15 0

"When he came to London he got deacon's orders and a cure, for which he had, for one year, 28 0 0

"In which year, for his board, ordination, and habit, he was indebted £30, which he afterwards paid, 30 0 0

"When he went to sea, where he had for one year £70, not paid till two years after his return, 70 0 0

"He then got a curacy at £30 per annum for two years, and by his own industry in writing, &c., he made it £60 per annum, 120 0 0

"He married and had a son; and he and his wife and child boarded for some years in or near London without running into debt.

"He had then a living given him in the country, let for £50 per annum, where he had five children more; in which time, and while he lived in London, he wrote a book, which he dedicated to Queen Mary, who for that reason gave him a living in the country, valued at £200 per annum, where he remained for nearly forty

years, and wherein his numerous offspring amounted, with the former, to eighteen or nineteen children.

"Half of his parsonage was first burnt, which he rebuilt: some time after the whole was burnt to the ground, which he rebuilt from the foundations; and it cost him above £400, besides the furniture, none of which was saved, and he was forced to renew it.

"About ten years since, he got a little living adjoining to his former, the profits of which very little more than defrayed the expenses of serving it, and sometimes hardly so much; his whole tithe having been in a manner swept away by inundations, for which the parishioners had a brief, though he thought it not decent for himself to be joined with them in it.

"For the greater part of these last ten years, he has been closely employed in composing a large book, whereby he hoped he might have done some benefit to the world, and in some measure amended his own fortunes. By sticking so close to this, he has broke a pretty strong constitution, and fallen into palsy and gout. Besides this, he has had sickness in his family for most of the years since he was married.

"His greater living seldom cleared above £160 per annum, out of which he allowed £20 per annum to a person who had married one of his daughters. Could we on the whole fix the balance, it would easily appear whether he had been an ill husband, or careless and idle, and taken no care of his family. Let us range on the one side his income, and on the other his expenses while he has been at the top of his fortunes, taking them at the full extent:—

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| " His income about £200 per annum for near forty years, . . . £8000 0 0 | | " Expended in sickness for above forty years, £——— | |
| | | " Expenses in taking his livings, repairing houses, &c., . . . 160 0 0 | |
| | | " Rebuilding part of his house the first time, . . 60 0 0 | |
| | | " Rebuilding the whole house, . . . 400 0 0 | |
| | | " Furnishing it, . . . ——— | |
| | | " Eight children born and buried, . . . ——— | |

* The value of the Epworth living, during the time that Mr Wenley held it, was never more than £200 per annum. Mr Kirk states that the same living is now worth £952 per annum.

| | |
|--|-------|
| "Ten (thank God!) living, brought up, and edu- cated, | _____ |
| "Most of the daughters put out to a way of living, | _____ |
| "To three sons for the best education I could get them in England, _____ | |
| "Attending the convoca- tion three years, . . . £150 0 0 | |

"Let all this be balanced, and then a guess may be easily made of his sorry management.

"He can struggle with the world, but not with Providence; nor can he resist sicknesses, fires, and inundations."*

Such was one of the last letters that Samuel Wesley ever wrote; or rather, we ought to say dictated, for such were his afflictions and weakness, that nearly the whole of it had to be written by his wife and by his second son, who penned it from his lips. It is an ample refutation of the unnatural charges brought against him by his brother; and scatters to the winds the vague ideas of all those who, in modern times, have been apt to think of Samuel Wesley as being, upon the whole, a good-hearted sort of man; but, at the same time, in some way, a spendthrift, and one who very culpably neglected the interests of his wife and family. All this is unfounded, unjust, and cruel; the result, not of research, but of indolent ignorance, which has too readily taken for granted, that which it ought, first of all, to have examined.

* *Wesley Family*, vol. i. p. 239.

CHAPTER XX.

DEATH AND CHARACTER—1735.

MR WESLEY never fully recovered from the effects of the serious accident which befell him in 1731. The reader will have perceived this in the letters given in the previous chapter. Mrs Wesley, writing to her son John, says, "Your father is in a very bad state of health; he sleeps little and eats less. He seems not to have any apprehension of his approaching exit, but I fear he has but a short time to live. It is with much pain and difficulty that he performs divine service on the Lord's-day, which sometimes he is obliged to contract very much. Everybody observes his decay but himself."*

Mr Wesley had a severe illness about the year 1733, which totally disabled him for six months. The first two sermons he preached after this affliction were from the words, "Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee," (John v. 14.)

The last two sermons, noted in his memorandum-book, were preached at Epworth, August 18, 1734, on 1 Sam. xii. 17: "Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord," &c. After showing that unseasonable weather, in time of harvest, is a just judgment inflicted by the hand of God for the wickedness of the people, he proceeds to address his congregation thus:—"I am afraid, nay, too well assured, that many of you have hardened your hearts as did Pharaoh; for otherwise, how came the house of God so empty here last Sunday? The people went in shameful droves to do their own ways, and find their own pleasures, and speak their own words; and left a very small flock behind them

* *Wesley Family.*

on their knees to cry mightily to God that He would have mercy upon us, that we might not perish."*

There is no evidence that Mr Wesley preached after this. His death-bed scene was exquisitely beautiful. His sons, John and Charles, were present, and from both of them we have accounts of it.

John Wesley, in a letter dated March 22, 1748, and supposed to be written to Archbishop Secker, says :—"My father did not die unacquainted with the faith of the gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first Reformers; the same which, by the grace of God, I preach, and which is just as new as Christianity. What he experienced before I know not; but I know that, during his last illness, which continued eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although, at that time, I understood him not. 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness,' said he to me, 'that is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity.' And when I asked him (the time of his change drawing nigh), 'Sir, are you in much pain?' He answered aloud with a smile, 'God does chasten me with pain, yea, all my bones with strong pain; but I thank Him for all, I bless Him for all, I love Him for all!' I think the last words he spoke, when I had just commended his soul to God, were, 'Now you have done all;' and, with the same serene, cheerful countenance, he fell asleep without one struggle, or sigh, or groan. I cannot therefore doubt but the Spirit of God bore an inward witness with his spirit that he was a child of God."†

John Wesley, in his sermon on Love, preached at Savannah in 1736, again adverts to his father's death, and says :—"When asked, not long before his release, 'Are the consolations of God small with you?' He replied aloud, 'No, no, no!' and then calling all that were near him by their names, he said, 'Think of heaven, talk of heaven; all the time is lost when we are not thinking of heaven.'"‡

Charles Wesley's description of his father's death is more lengthened, and is contained in a letter addressed to his brother Samuel, and which was first published by Dr Priestley in 1791.

* *Wesley Family.*

† "This letter was written during a controversy with Secker, respecting the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit."—WESLEY'S *Works*, vol. xii. p. 93.

‡ *Wesley's Works*, vol. vii. p. 475.

The letter was written two days after the funeral, and is as follows :—

“ EPWORTH, *April 30, 1735.*

“ DEAR BROTHER,—After all your desire of seeing my father alive, you are at last assured you must see his face no more till he is raised in incorruption. You have reason to envy us, who could attend him in the last stage of his illness. The few words he could utter I saved, and hope never to forget. Some of them were, ‘Nothing too much to suffer for heaven. The weaker I am in body, the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God. There is but a step between me and death. To-morrow I will see you all with me round this table, that we may once more drink of the cup of blessing before we drink of it new in the kingdom of God. With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I die.’

“The morning he was to communicate, he was so exceeding weak and full of pain, that he could not, without the utmost difficulty, receive the elements, often repeating, ‘Thou shakest me, thou shakest me;’ but, immediately after receiving, there followed the most visible alteration. He appeared full of faith and peace, which extended even to his body, for he was so much better that we almost hoped he would have recovered.* The fear of death he had entirely conquered, and at last gave up his latest human desires of finishing Job, paying his debts, and seeing you. He often laid his hand upon my head and said, ‘Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not.’† To my sister Emily, he said, ‘Do not be concerned at my death, God will then begin to manifest himself to my family.’‡ On my asking him whether he did not find himself worse, he replied, ‘Oh my Charles, I feel a great deal, God chastens me with strong pain, but I praise Him for it, I thank Him for it, I love Him for it.’

“On the 25th his voice failed him, and nature seemed entirely spent, when, on my brother’s asking, ‘Whether he was not near

* From this, good old Henry Moore deduced the inference that he now, for the first time, received the witness of the Spirit; and that, until now, “this good man had laboured in the fear of God through a long legal night of nearly seventy years.” Absurd nonsense!

† Strange words these, and gloriously fulfilled.

‡ Another remarkable utterance, remarkably fulfilled.

heaven?' he answered distinctly, and with the most of hope and triumph that could be expressed in sounds, 'Yes, I am.' He spoke once more, just after my brother had used the commendatory prayer; his last words were, 'Now, you have done all!'

"This was about half an hour after six, from which time till sunset he made signs of offering up himself, till my brother, having again used the prayer, the very moment it was finished, he expired.

"His passage was so smooth and insensible that, notwithstanding the stopping of his pulse, and ceasing of all sign of life and motion, we continued over him a considerable time in doubt whether the soul was departed or no. My mother (who for several days before he died, hardly ever went into his chamber but she was carried out again in a fit) was far less shocked at the news than we expected, and told us that now she was heard, in his having so easy a death, and in her being strengthened so to bear it.

"My brother had laid aside all hopes or fears (for I cannot certainly say which) of succeeding; but, by yours, we guess Mr Oglethorpe has quickened him. A petition might easily be sent if now necessary. A neighbouring clergyman has sent word that 'he has the living,' which would be bad news, but that another as confidently affirms he has it. How many more may be sure of it we cannot say, but if Providence pleases a Wesley will have it after all, though in the gift of the crown. I hope, and so does my brother, that you will have their wish, and that he may fail of his.

"Though you have lost your chief reason for coming, yet there are others which make your presence more necessary than ever. My mother, who will hardly ever leave Epworth, would be exceedingly glad to see you as soon as can be. She does not administer, so can neither sue nor be sued. We have computed the debts as near as can be, and find they amount to about £100, exclusive of cousin Richardson's. Mrs Knight, her landlady, seized all her quick stock, valued at above £40 for £15 my father owed her on Monday last, the day he was buried; and my brother this afternoon gives a note for the money, in order to get the stock at liberty to sell; for security of which he has the stock made over to him, and will be paid as it can be sold. My father was buried very frugally, yet decently, in the churchyard according to his own desire. It will be highly necessary to bring all accounts of what

he owed you, that you may mark all the goods in the house as principal creditor, and thereby secure to my mother time and liberty to sell them to the best advantage. All papers and letters of importance I have sealed up and keep till you come.

"If you take London in your way, my mother desires you would remember she is a clergyman's widow. Let the society give her what they please—she must be still in some degree *burdensome* to you, as she calls it. How do I envy you that glorious burden, and wish I could share it. You must put me in some way of getting a little money, that I may do something in this shipwreck of the family, for somebody, though it be no more than furnishing a plank.

"My mother sends her love and blessing; we all send our love to you, and to my sister and Phill. I should be ashamed of having so much business in my letter were it not necessary. I would choose to write and think of nothing but my father. Before we meet I hope you will have finished his elegy. Pray write if there be time.—I am, your most affectionate brother,

"CHARLES WESLEY."*

Thus lived and died Samuel Wesley.† Near the east end of Epworth Church, there is a plain grit tombstone, supported by brick-work, on which is cut the following inscription, said to have been composed by Mrs Wesley. Passing over the absurd manner in which it is divided, it is utterly unworthy of the distinguished man whose memory it is intended to perpetuate:—

" Here
Lyeth all that was
Mortal of *Samuel Wesley*,
A.M. He was rector of *Ep-*
worth 39 years, and departed
this Life 25 of April 1735,
Aged 72,

* *Original Letters*, published by Priestley, p. 55.

† The following appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1735:—"Died, April 25, at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, the Rev. Mr Samuel Wesley, M.A., rector of that parish, a person of singular parts, piety, and learning; author of several poetical and controversial pieces. He had for some years been composing a critical 'Dissertation on the Book of Job,' which he has left unfinished, and almost printed. He proved, ever since his minority, a most zealous assertor of the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England."

As he liv'd so he died,
 in the true Catholic Faith
 of the Holy Trinity in Unity,
 And that *Jesus Christ* is God
 incarnate : and the only
 Saviour of Mankind.
 Acts iv. 12.

' Blessed are the dead
 Which die in the Lord, yea,
 saith the Spirit, that they may
 rest from their labours and
 Their works do follow them.'
 Rev. xiv. 13."*

Our task is ended. Many and pleasant have been the hours spent in tracing the history of one of the noblest men that God ever made. It is superfluous to say more respecting him ; and yet, with a lingering reluctance to quit the work, we cannot deny ourselves the gratification of adding a few more words concerning his general character.

Samuel Wesley, jun., wrote an elegy immediately after his father's death, which his brother John published in the first volume of the *Arminian Magazine*. The following are extracts :—

" With opening life his early worth began,
 The boy misleads not, but foreshows the man.
 Directed wrong, though first he miss'd the way,
 Train'd to mistake, and disciplined to stray ;
 Not long :—for reason gilded error's night,
 And doubts, well-founded, shot a dawn of light—
 Nor prejudice o'ersway'd his heart and head.
 Resolved to follow truth where'er she led,
 The radiant track audacious to pursue
 From fame, from interest, and from friends he flew.
 Those shock'd him first who laugh at human sway,
 Who preach, ' Because commanded, disobey ;'
 Alike the crown and mitre who forswore,
 And scoff'd profanely at the martyr's gore ;
 Though not in vain the sacred current flow'd,
 Which gave this champion to the Church of God.
 " No worldly views the real convert call ;
 He sought God's altar when it seem'd to fall ;
 To Oxford hasted, even in dangerous days,
 When royal anger struck the fated place ;
 When senseless policy was pleased to view
 With favour all religions but the true.

* *Wesley Family.*

"Nor yet unmention'd shall in silence lie
His slighted and derided poetry;
Whate'er his strains, still glorious was his end,
Faith to assert, and virtue to defend.

"He sung how God the Saviour deign'd to expire,
With Vida's piety though not his fire;
Deduced his Maker's praise from age to age,
Through the long annals of the sacred page;
And not inglorious was the poet's fate,
Liked and rewarded by the good and great;
For gracious smiles not pious Anne denied,
And beauteous Mary bless'd him when she died."

The poetry of the Epworth rector has unquestionably been "slighted and derided," and it must be honestly confessed that some of his verses are exceedingly careless and inharmonious; but this was not so much the fault of the man's poetic genius, as of his too great haste in writing them. His poems were written amid the pressure of parochial duties; and, we incline to think, sometimes when he was hard pushed for want of food and clothes for himself and family. Even his most hasty and unfinished pieces flash with the purest poetic fire, and are not without signs that the man who wrote them was a bard of the highest order. It was from him that his three sons, Samuel, John, and Charles, and his two daughters, Emilia and Mehetabel, inherited that remarkable poetic passion, which gave birth to some of the finest verse in the English language. Copious extracts from his poetry have been already given; but as yet no mention has been made of his "Eupolis's Hymn to the Creator."* Dr Adam Clarke pronounces this poem to be "the finest on the subject in the English language. It possesses what Racine calls the *genie createur*, the genuine spirit of poetry. It is not saying too much to assert, the man who was the author of what is called 'Eupolis's Hymn to the Creator,' had he taken time, care, and pains, and had not been continually harassed with the *res augusta domi*, would have adorned the highest walks of poetry."†

This remarkable poem was first published by John Wesley, in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1778, and the following are extracts from it:—

* Some writers have been disposed to think that this poem was at least, in part, the production of Mehetabel Wesley, but John Wesley always declared that it was written by his father.—MOORE'S *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. p. 48.

† *Wesley Family*.

" Author of Being ! Source of Light !
With unfading beauties bright,
Fulness, goodness, rolling round,
Thy own fair orb, without a bound ;
Whether Thee, thy suppliants call,
Truth, or Good, or One, or All,
Ei, or Jao ; Thee we hail,
Essence that can never fail.

" Thee, when morning greets the skies,
With rosy cheeks and humid eyes ;
Thee, when sweet declining day,
Sinks in purple waves away ;
Thee will I sing, O parent Jove !
And teach the world to praise and love.

" Yonder azure vault on high,
Yonder blue, low, liquid sky,
Earth, on its firm basis placed,
And with circling waves embraced,
All-creating power confess,
All their mighty Maker bless.

" The feather'd souls that swim the air,
And bathe in liquid ether there,
The lark, precentor of their choir,
Leading them higher still and higher,
Listen and learn ; the angelic notes
Repeating in their warbling throats ;
And ere to soft repose they go,
Teach them to their lords below ;
On the green turf, their mossy nest,
The evening anthem swells their breast.

" Source of Light ! Thou bid'st the sun,
On his burning axles run ;
The stars like dust around him fly,
And strew the area of the sky.

" O ye nurses of soft dreams,
Reedy brooks, and winding streams,
Or murm'ring o'er the pebbles sheen,
Or sliding through the meadows green,
Or where through matted sedge you creep,
Travelling to your Parent deep,
Sound His praise by whom you rose,
That Sea, which neither ebbs nor flows.

" No evil can from Thee proceed ;
'Tis only suffer'd, not decreed—
Darkness is not from the sun,
Nor mount the shades till he is gone.

"O Father, King ! whose Heavenly face
 Shines serene on all Thy race ;
 We Thy magnificence adore,
 And Thy well-known aid implore :
 Nor vainly for Thy help we call ;
 Nor can we want, for Thou art All ! "

Mr Wesley was a man of immense reading, and was possessed of great vivacity and wit. Sometimes he has been represented as of a harsh and stern character ; but nothing can be farther from the truth than this—"His children," says Miss Wesley, his granddaughter, "idolised his memory." They would scarce have done that if he had been ungenial and gruff. It is true, he kept his children in the strictest order ; but he also evinced the greatest tenderness, and thus secured both the respect and love of his numerous family. To his judicious method of instructing and managing his offspring, the Methodists owe an incalculable debt of gratitude ; and, on this account, his name among them ought to be held in lasting remembrance. He was full of anecdote, and of witty and wise sayings, which gave to his private conversations great interest. The withering wit of his son Samuel, the quiet sarcasm of his son John, the playful raillery of his daughter Emilia, and the keen satire of Mehetabel, were all inherited from himself. In early life he was connected with some of the greatest wits then flourishing, and to the day of his death highly relished pleasantry, when it was pure and good-tempered.

One instance, given by Dr Adam Clarke, is as follows :—At Temple Belwood, near Epworth, lived a miserly man, who, contrary to the whole tenor of his life, once mustered courage enough to invite a few friends to dinner. Mr Wesley was present, and displayed his wit, and his great facility in composition, by repeating, impromptu, at the close of such an unusual festival :—

"Thanks for this feast ! for 'tis no less
 Than eating manna in the wilderness.
 Here some have starved, where we have found relief,
 And seen the wonders of a chine of beef.
 Here chimneys smoke, which never smoked before,
 And we have dined, where we shall dine no more."

Which last line was immediately confirmed by the mean-spirited host, who said, "No, gentlemen ; it is too expensive."

Dr Clarke relates another story, which was somewhat severely criticised in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1824 ; was corrected by

Mr Watson in his *Life of Wesley*, in 1831; and has been sharply handled by Mr Kirk, in his graphic biography of 1864. Because the story has excited so much attention, I feel bound to give it. Dr Clarke says he has related the story, as nearly as possible, in the very words used by John Wesley to himself, when they last met in Bristol.

Samuel Wesley had a clerk, who was well-meaning and honest, but, at the same time, weak and vain. Of this, an instance is given somewhat ludicrous. It is said, that on the return of King William from one of his martial expeditions, this self-conceited official rose up, in the midst of divine service, in Epworth church, and, with the nasal twang usual among such functionaries, and to the unfortunate amusement of the congregation, said—"Let us sing, to the praise and glory of God, a hymn of my own composing:—

"King William is come home, come home,
King William home is come;
Therefore let us together sing,
The hymn that is called 'Te D'um.'"

This poetical clerk believed the rector, Mr Wesley, to be the greatest man in Epworth parish; and that, as he stood next to him in church services, he was also next in worth and dignity. Among the man's other emoluments was the privilege of wearing the rector's cast-off clothes and wigs, for the latter of which his head was far too small. Mr Wesley, finding him particularly vain of one of these wigs, formed the design to mortify him in the presence of the congregation. One morning, before church time, Mr Wesley said, "John, I shall preach on a particular subject to-day; and shall choose my own psalm, of which I shall give out the first line, and you shall proceed as usual." Accordingly the service went forward as it was wont to do, till the time came for singing, when Mr Wesley gave out the following line—

"Like to an owl in ivy bush"—

This was sung, and then John, peeping out of his large canonical wig, proceeded with the next line, and, in the orthodox twang, drawled out—

"That rueful thing am I!"

The congregation, struck with John's appearance, saw the ludicrousness of the coincidence, and, to John's great mortification, burst into a fit of laughter.

Such is Dr Clarke's version of the story. The reviewer in the magazine objects to it—first, Because it was too trivial to merit a place in such a work; second, Because it reflects upon the good-nature of Mr Wesley, and upon his attention to that uniform dignity and seriousness of demeanour which are justly expected from a Christian minister; and third, Because, in one important particular, the story was untrue, for Mr Wesley took no part in the business whatever; but the whole was the culpable trick of the whimsical clerk, who chose such an opportunity of rendering himself ridiculous, and of making his neighbours laugh.

Mr Watson admits that the anecdote is laughable enough, but says, it "implicates Mr Wesley in an irreverent act in the house of God, of which he was not capable;" and moreover, "Mr Wesley had no hand in selecting the psalm, which appears to have been purely accidental."

Mr Kirk takes the same view, and further, doubts whether such lines were ever read at all; or, if they were, he suggests that they must have been part of another hymn of the clerk's "own composing." Perhaps so; Mr Kirk says neither he nor his friends have been able to find anything like the lines in either Sternhold and Hopkins, or in any other of the "old versions" of the Psalms. This is quite correct, and we believe that the exact lines above recited cannot be found in any "version;" but the following occur in an edition of Sternhold's, published in 1729, and now before us:—

"And as an owl in desert is,
Lo, I am such an one;
I watch, and as a sparrow on
The house-top am alone."

The origin of the doubts respecting the authenticity of the story may be found in the following letter, published in the *Wesleyan Times* newspaper of March 7, 1864. It was written to Dr Clarke by Miss Sarah Wesley, at the time he published his "Wesley Family:"—

"May 28, 1822.

"MY DEAR DOCTOR,—I omitted to mention one material circumstance in my last, relative to the clerk and his psalm, as I well remember hearing my good father, '(the Rev. Charles Wesley,)' relate it to us.

"It was not by my grandfather's appointment he gave it out,

but from the clerk's own sagacity, little suspecting the old Caxon resembled him to an owl.

"Indeed, a pious pastor would not have excited a laugh in a sacred place, or punished a silly blockhead at the expense of interrupting the devotion of a whole congregation; but as anecdotes never lose by tradition, you have heard it was design, not accident. Dean Swift might have done so, but not Samuel Wesley, senior, who had ever inculcated the duty, even in psalmody, of worshipping the Lord with reverence.

"My dear father told me the circumstance when pointing out to us the follies to which vanity exposed a man, and the effects they produced. But my worthy grandfather could not, consistent with his respect to the sacred place, have directed a silly man to divert his audience. Accidentally it was indeed ludicrous, and might have cured him of a little innocent vanity, for all the people saw the resemblance.

"I never recollected, till my last letter went, that I had left out this statement, and hope it will come time enough for the fact to be mentioned as it was; for, otherwise, there is a shade cast on my good old ancestor which no wit can chase away."

In another letter to Dr Clarke, dated "Jan. 24, 1824," the same writer says:—

"Your authority for John, the clerk, is my dear uncle; ours, my father and Aunt Hall, who, had they lived, I doubt not, would have stood to their account of the circumstance, and contested it with their good brother; who, when he related it to you, was considerably advanced in years, and far more likely to misplace circumstances, with such a weight of business and years, than my father or aunt, who had made us acquainted with the anecdote in the vigour of their memory. If it were as you state, I am persuaded had my dear uncle been younger, he never would have related (without disapprobation, even of his own parent) such conduct in a church."*

Dr Clarke still adhered to the correctness of his version of the story, and defended the action on the ground that "it was the only way in which a weak, well-meaning, but vain man, could be cured of a vanity discreditable to himself and troublesome to others;" and that "the means employed were as innocent, as they were appropriate and efficient." He also justifies his publication of the

* *Wesleyan Times* for March 28, 1864.

anecdote, because he thought the thing was "characteristic of the man;" that it is "from facts of this nature that the biographer forms a proper estimate of the character he describes;" and that, without "such incidents," he must "plod on in dry detail of facts," in a manner "little pleasing to himself," and almost "unsupportable to his readers."

This is all that the writer knows respecting this paltry business, which has become far more important than it deserves to be. It has already occupied too much of the writer's space, and hence, without any comment of his own, he leaves the ingenious reader to form his own opinion.

Matthew Wesley, in the letter already quoted in the previous chapter, insinuates that his brother had indulged in "ungovernable appetites." This was an unfounded and cruel accusation. In all respects, Samuel Wesley was a most temperate and frugal man, except, perhaps, in his indulgence of snuff and tobacco.

Living in the midst of Lincolnshire fens, it is not surprising that he used the pipe; for the belief was common that it helped to prevent disease. It is not improbable, however, that the weed was an early friend; for, in the *Athenian Oracle*, while the editors allow that tobacco when immoderately used is insalubrious, they also, as is usual with smokers, contend that, when properly employed, it helps to cure headaches, toothaches, asthmas, and old coughs; and though it might induce drinking, yet so did the eating of bread and cheese or Westphalia ham. Snuff, however, seems to have been Mr Wesley's favourite indulgence; and on this account he was, perhaps, undutifully attacked by his son, Samuel, as early as the year 1714, in one of the keenest satires that the young poet ever penned. Speaking of the box, he says:—

"The snuff-box first provokes our just disdain,
That rival of the fan and of the cane.
Your modern beaux to richest shrines intrust
Their worthless stores of fashionable dust."

And again of snuff itself:—

"Strange is the power of snuff, whose pungent grains
Can make fops speak, and furnish beaux with brains;
Nor care of cleanliness, nor love of dress,
Can save their clothes from brick-dust nastiness.
Some think the part too small of modish sand
Which at a niggard pinch they can command;
Nor can their fingers for that task suffice,
Their nose too greedy, not their hands too nice;

To such a height with these is fashion grown,
 They feed their very nostrils with a spoon.
 One, and but one degree is wanting yet,
 To make our senseless luxury complete;
 Some choice regale, useless as snuff, and dear,
 To feed the mazy windings of the ear."

This withering satire was written by young Wesley at the request of his aunt, Ann Annesley, and for it he makes a graceful and not unneeded apology to his father. Mr Kirk thinks that, because of his embarrassments, Samuel Wesley ought to have dispensed with the luxuries of the pipe and of snuff; but perhaps if Mr Kirk himself had ever used them, his opinion would have been somewhat modified. John Wesley says the use of tobacco is "an uncleanly and unwholesome self-indulgence;" and that the use of snuff is "a silly, nasty, dirty custom."* He enacted a law, making it imperative that on no account should any of his preachers take snuff, and that they should strongly dissuade the Methodists from taking it, and should answer all their pretences for doing so, and especially the pretence that it cured the colic.† He directed that, on receiving "new helpers" at Conference, solemn fasting and prayer should be used, and this question among others be proposed to the presented candidates, "Do you take no snuff, tobacco, drams?"‡ We have not a syllable to say against all this. We believe that, for medical purposes, smoking and snuffing have no good in them; and, moreover, we share in the disgust felt by thousands of intelligent and good people at seeing so many empty-headed boys of the present generation attempting to deceive the public, and to make them believe that they are men, because they happen to have the audacity to cultivate a jagged moustache, and to smoke a pipe; yet, considering the sequestered life which Mr Wesley lived, and considering the almost unceasing troubles through which he had to pass, we can easily excuse his seeking, at so insignificant an expense, the sort of soothing stupor or cerebral solace, which, as old smokers and old snuffers tell us, is derivable from the much abused, fragrant weed, tobacco.

For forty-seven years Mr Wesley was a diligent, faithful minister of Christ.

"As a pastor," says Dr Whitehead, "he was indefatigable in the duties of his office: a constant preacher, feeding the flock

* *Wesley's Works*, vol. xii. pp. 231, 232. † *Ibid.*, vol. viii. p. 296. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

with the pure doctrines of the gospel; and diligent in visiting the sick, and administering such advice as their situations required. This integrity was conspicuous, and his conduct uniform. Few men have been so diligent in the pastoral office as he was; none perhaps more so. Though his income was small, and his family large, he had always something to give to those in distress. In conversation he was grave, yet instructive, lively, and full of anecdote. His last moments were as conspicuous for resignation and Christian fortitude, as his life had been for zeal and diligence." *

"Mr Wesley," says the Rev. John Hampson, "was a voluminous writer. He was the author of a Latin Comment on Job; a work of much erudition, and perhaps for that reason but little read. He also wrote the History of the Bible, and the Life of Christ in verse, with several smaller pieces. His larger poems were rather injurious than advantageous to his reputation; and, instead of increasing his estimation with the public, exposed him to the derision of the wits, and the censure of the critics.† But Mr Wesley's talents as a writer are the least of his praise. He was not merely a man of learning and ability. His piety and integrity were striking and exemplary. He was given to hospitality; and in every respect a most excellent parish priest. The last moments of this valuable man were crowned with most striking fortitude, magnanimity, and Christian resignation. It is no exaggeration to say, that a better man, or a more vigilant and faithful pastor, he did not leave behind him. He united the zeal and courage of a martyr, with the simplicity and evangelical spirit of an apostle; and though he had no great cause to boast the munificence, he possessed the esteem of some of the first characters in the nation." ‡

"Samuel Wesley," says Dr Clarke, "was of a short stature; of a spare, but athletic make; and nearly resembled in person his son John. It is likely that the picture prefixed to his 'Dissertations on the Book of Job' was a correct resemblance of him. §

* Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i. pp. 21 and 32.

† This is true only in part. Some of the wits and critics, as Garth, ridiculed Wesley; but others very highly extolled him.

‡ Hampson's *Life of Wesley*, vol. i.

§ We doubt the correctness of the statement that Wesley "was of a short stature." The likeness referred to, of which the portrait in this volume is a faithful copy, does not convey this idea.

"He was earnest, conscientious, and indefatigable in his search after truth. He thought deeply on every subject which was either to form an article in his creed, or a principle for his conduct. His orthodoxy was pure and solid; his religious conduct strictly correct; his piety towards God ardent; his loyalty to his king unsullied; and his love to his fellow-creatures strong and unconfined. Though of High Church principles and High Church politics,* yet he could separate the *man* from the *opinions* he held, and when he found him in distress, knew him only as a friend and brother. He was a rigid disciplinarian, both in his church and his family. He knew all his parishioners. He visited them from house to house; he sifted their creed, and permitted none to be corrupt in their opinions or in their practices, without instruction or reproof. In this manner he went through his parish, which was near three miles long, three times; and he was visiting it the fourth time round when he fell into his last sickness." †

Nothing more is needed. In the foregoing testimonies the writer heartily concurs. Mr Wesley's behaviour, as a parish clergyman, was in all respects exemplary excepting one; we mean his enforcement of canonical laws concerning penance, the neglect of which, we are bound to say, would have been more virtuous than the observance.

Remarks have sometimes been made to the effect that Mr Wesley's labours were honoured with but small success; and, in support of this, the testimony of his son John is quoted, but quoted only in part. The entire entry in his journal is as follows:—"1742. Sunday, June 13.—I preached in Epworth churchyard to a vast multitude, gathered together from all parts. I continued among them for near three hours, and yet we scarce knew how to part. Oh, let none think his labour of love is lost because the fruit

* Once more we protest against this. What were High Church principles and politics? Bishop Burnet, who flourished at the time when the names of High Church and Low Church were first introduced, shall answer. He writes, (*History of Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 347:)—"All that treated the Dissenters with temper and moderation, and were for residing constantly at their cures, and for labouring diligently in them; that expressed a zeal against the Prince of Wales, and for the Revolution; that wished well to the present war, and to the alliance against France, were called Low Churchmen." If such was a Low Churchman, of course, a High Churchman was just the opposite. Who, in the face of this, will pretend to say that Samuel Wesley was "of High Church principles, and High Church politics?"

† Clarke's *Wesley Family*.

does not immediately appear ! Near forty years did my father labour here, but he saw little fruit of all his labour. I took some pains among this people too, and my strength also seemed spent in vain ; but now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed, sown so long since, now sprung up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins." *

If this testimony of John Wesley means what it says, it means that the labours of his father at Epworth, so far from being barren, were crowned with great results ; only the results were more visible after his death than they were before.

We have already seen that Mr Wesley outlived the brutal hostility with which he was met during the first years of his residence at Epworth, and that his dozen communicants had increased to above a hundred. But besides all this, we have another testimony by his son John, contained in a letter written to the venerable father a few months only before his death. He says—"For many years you have diligently fed the flock committed to your care with the sincere milk of the Word. Many of them the Great Shepherd has, by your hand, delivered from the hand of the Destroyer, some of whom have already entered into peace, and some remain unto this day. For myself, I doubt not but when your warfare is accomplished you shall come to your grave, not with sorrow, but as a ripe shock of corn, full of years and victories." †

Such a declaration sufficiently refutes the vague, floating idea respecting Samuel Wesley's want of ministerial success ; but had such testimony not existed, and had the idea mentioned been strictly true, it would have been enough of honour, for even so good a man as the Epworth rector, to be the author of some of the best books in the English language, and to be the father of the greatest evangelist of modern times, and of the best sacred bard that has flourished since the days when the poetic lyre was made to vibrate music so sweetly celestial, under the wondrous inspired touch of David the son of Jesse.

* *Wesley's Works*, vol. i., p 356.

† *Original Letters*, published by Priestley, p. 40.

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APPENDIX.

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TITLES OF THE POEMS IN MR WESLEY'S "MAGGOTS."

The Titles, in brief, are as follows :—

1. A Maggot.
2. Two Soldiers Killing one another for a Groat.
3. A Tame Snake in a Box of Bran.
4. The Grunting of a Hog.
5. To my Gingerbread Mistress.
6. The Bear-faced Lady.
7. A Pair of Breeches.
8. A Tobacco Pipe.
9. A Cow's Tail.
10. The Liar.
11. A Hat broke at Cudgels.
12. A Covetous Old Fellow.
13. A Supper of a — Duck.
14. To the Land of a Shock Bitch.
15. Elegy on the Death of Poor Spot.
16. A Box like an Egg.
17. The Beggar and Poet.
18. Plures aluit Aristoteles quam Alexander.
19. A King turned Thresher.
20. A Discourteous Damsel.
21. A Cheese.
22. A Journey.
23. The Leather Bottle.
24. Out of Lucian's true History.

Then follow the Dialogues, viz :—

1. Between a Thatcher and a Gardener.
2. Between a Herring and a Whale.
3. Between a Utensil and a Frying-pan.

After these the following, viz :—

1. Against a Kiss.
2. On a Certain Nose.
3. In Praise of Horns.
4. Advice to Monsieur Ragoo.
5. A Pretended Scholar.
6. Three Skips of a Louse.

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LIST OF PAMPHLETS PUBLISHED AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION IN 1688.

1. Reflections upon the late Great Revolution. Written by a Lay-Hand in the country for the satisfaction of some neighbours. Licensed April 9, 1689. London : Printed for R. Chiswell, 1689. 4to. 68 pp.
2. The History of the Desertion ; or, Account of all the Public Affairs in England, from September 1688 to the 12th of February 1689. By a person of Quality. Licensed April 10, 1689. Printed for R. Chiswell. London : 1689. 4to. Pp. 162.
3. The Case of Allegiance, in our present circumstances, considered. In a Letter from a Minister in the City to a Minister in the Country. Licensed March 21, 1689. London : Printed for R. Chiswell, 1689. 4to. Pp. 34.
4. A Justification of the Whole Proceedings of their Majesties King William and Queen Mary ; of their Royal Highnesses Prince George and Princess Ann ; of the Convocation, Army, Ministers of State, and others, in this Great Revolution. By Authority. Printed for Randal Taylor, 1689. 4to. Pp. 37.
5. Remarks upon a Paper, entitled, An Inquiry into the Measures of Submission to the Supreme Authority. London : 1689. 4to. Pp. 48.
6. A Seasonable Discourse, wherein is examined What is Lawful during the confusions and revolutions of Government, especially in the

case of a King deserting his Kingdom, &c. Printed by Rd. Janeway, 1689. 4to. Pp. 72.

7. A Modest Examination of the New Oath of Allegiance. By a Divine of the Church of England. London: Printed for R. Taylor, 1689. 4to. Pp. 8.

8. The Case of the People of England in their present circumstances considered, showing how far they are or are not obliged by the Oath of Allegiance. London: Printed for R. Taylor, 1689. 4to. Pp. 20.

9. The Sovereign Right and Power of the People over Tyrants clearly stated and plainly proved, with some Reflections on the late posture of affairs. By a True Protestant Englishman, and well-wisher to Posterity. London: 1689. 4to. Pp. 27.

10. An Examination of the Scruples of those who refuse to take the Oath of Allegiance. By a Divine of the Church of England. London: Printed for R. Chiswell, 1689. Pp. 34.

11. A friendly Conference concerning the New Oath of Allegiance, wherein the Objections against taking the Oaths are impartially examined, and the reasons of obedience confirmed from the writings of the profound Bishop Sanderson, &c. By a Divine of the Church of England. Licensed April 19, 1689. London: Printed for S. Smith. 4to. Pp. 35.

12. Some Considerations touching Succession and Allegiance. London: Printed for R. Chiswell, 1689. Licensed April 9, 1689. 4to. Pp. 34.

13. Considerations humbly offered for taking the Oath of Allegiance to King William and Queen Mary. London: Printed for J. Leake, 1689. 4to. Pp. 62.

14. The New Oath of Allegiance justified from the original constitution of the English Monarchy. London: Printed for Randal Taylor, 1689. 4to. Pp. 27.

15. Reflections upon a Late Book, entitled, "The Case of Allegiance Considered, wherein is shown that the Church of England doctrine of Non-resistance and Passive Obedience is not inconsistent with taking the New Oaths to their present Majesties." London: Printed for Richard Baldwin, 1689. Pp. 16.

16. A Letter to a Bishop, concerning the present Settlement and the New Oaths. London: Printed for Robert Clavel, 1689. 4to. Pp. 36. *N.B.*—Robert Clavel printed Samuel Wesley's Letter on Dissenting Academies.

17. A Full Answer to all the Popular Objections that have yet appeared for not taking the Oath of Allegiance; particularly offered to the consideration of all such of the Divines of the Church of England,

and others, as are yet unsatisfied. By a Divine of the Church of England. London: Printed for R. Baldwin, 1689. 4to. Pp. 83.

18. A Representation of the Threatening Dangers impending over Protestants in Great Britain, before the Coming of His Highness the Prince of Orange. 1689. 4to. Pp. 54.

19. A Letter, written by a Clergyman to his Neighbour, concerning the Present Circumstances of the Kingdom, and the Allegiance that is due to the King and Queen. London: Printed for R. Chiswell, 1689. 4to. Pp. 13.

20. A Treatise of Monarchy. Done by an Earnest Desirer of his Country's Peace. London: Printed for R. Baldwin, 1689. 4to. Pp. 73.

21. The Proceedings of the present Parliament justified by the Opinion of Hugo Grotius, &c. By a Lover of the Peace of his Country. London: Printed by R. Taylor, 1689. 4to. Pp. 20.

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LIST OF BOOKS CONDENSED IN "THE YOUNG STUDENT'S LIBRARY."

1. Works of Dr Lightfoot. 2 vols. folio.
2. Works of Dr Barrow. 3 vols. folio.
3. Life of Archbishop Usher, with a collection of Three Hundred of his Letters. Folio.
4. Usher's Antiquities of the British Churches, &c. Folio.
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NOTE.—Page 198.

AFTER this work was sent to press, the writer ascertained that the story, given on the authority of John Wesley, page 198, is not strictly accurate. The following are the facts of the case, in brief:—Though the Marquis of Normanby was probably the means of obtaining for Samuel Wesley the rectory of South Ormsby, the real *patrons* of the living were certain members of the Massingberd family. It also appears that the house of the patron, which was situated in the pariah, was rented, not by the Marquis of Normanby, but by the Earl of Castleton; and that it was the latter nobleman who so resented the affront to his mistress, that Samuel Wesley found it expedient to resign the living. According to the Bishop's Register at Lincoln, Mr Wesley took possession of the South Ormsby Rectory on the 25th of June 1691.

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